QL
692
K4K45X
BIRD

Kenya Birds

SMITHSONIAN
OCT 11 2002
LIBRARIES

Volume 9: 1 & 2 • 2001 August 2002 ISSN 1023-3679

SHOUT
SHARE
IT

Kenya Birds, Volume 9: 1 & 2 2001 August 2002

Kenya Birds is published jointly by the Department of Ornithology, National Museums of Kenya, and the Bird Committee of the East Africa Natural History Society — BirdLife in Kenya and Uganda.

Editor: Fleur Ng'weno

Editorial Sub-Committee: Graeme Backhurst, Gordon Boy, Mbaabu Mathiu, Catherine Ngarachu, Fleur Ng'weno, Itai Shanni.

© Nature Kenya 2002

Printed by Fotoform

Subscriptions

Kenya Birds is distributed free to members of Nature Kenya.

Membership fees are KSh 800/= for full members, 1,000/= for family members, 300/= for students, and 3,000/= for sponsors. See the website, www.naturekenya.org for overseas rates. Send your name, address and cheque or money order to Nature Kenya at the address below.

Subscription to ***Kenya Birds*** for non-members: KSh 400/= (Kenya), USD 8 (Uganda/Tanzania) and USD 12 (rest of world: airmail rate). Please make cheque or credit card payments (in any convertible currency) to Nature Kenya.

Back numbers of most issues are available: contact the Nature Kenya office.

Contacts

Articles and notes for *Kenya Birds*

The Editor, *Kenya Birds*, Nature Kenya, PO Box 44486, GPO 00100 Nairobi, Kenya. E-mail: fleur@africaonline.co.ke *or* eanhs@africaonline.co.ke

Records • National Birdmap • Nest record cards

Department of Ornithology, National Museums of Kenya, PO Box 40658, GPO 00100 Nairobi, Kenya. Phone Nairobi 3742161/31 ext. 243, fax 3741424. E-mail: kbirds@africaonline.co.ke Website: www.museums.or.ke

Bird Committee • birdwalks and excursions • birding hotline • regional birding groups • *Kenya Birds* and *Scopus* subscriptions

Nature Kenya, P O Box 44486, GPO 00100 Nairobi, Kenya
Phone Nairobi 3749957/3746090, fax 3741049
E-mail: office@naturekenya.org Website: www. naturekenya.org

Contents

2 *Kenya Birds*, Ten Years On

4 Letter from the Editor

Feature Articles

5 Birding in... Ewaso Narok Swamp by Thuita Thenya

10 Rumours of Ruma... confirmed! by Sir Jeffrey James

Updates

13 Bird Committee

16 Department of Ornithology

Short Notes

12 A Surprise Visit

18 Carmine Bee-eater influx

19 Vulture Restaurant at Hell s Gate

44 Moment of Conflict

Reports

20 Important Bird Areas

24 Bird Ringing at Ngulia

27 African Waterbird Counts

Records

32 Records and Overview

34 Afrotropical Atlas Records

37 Palearctic Atlas Records

39 Breeding Records

On the Cover: Brown-chested Plover, a migrant from West Africa and vagrant to Western Kenya. These beautiful plovers were recorded in the Masai Mara National Reserve in August and December 2000, and on Yala swamp edge near Kadenge in August 2001. Photo by **Jules Tileston**, in the Masai Mara.

African Wood Owl by Andrew Kamiti (See page 44)

Illustrations

Andrew Kamiti and Nani Croze

Kenya Birds,

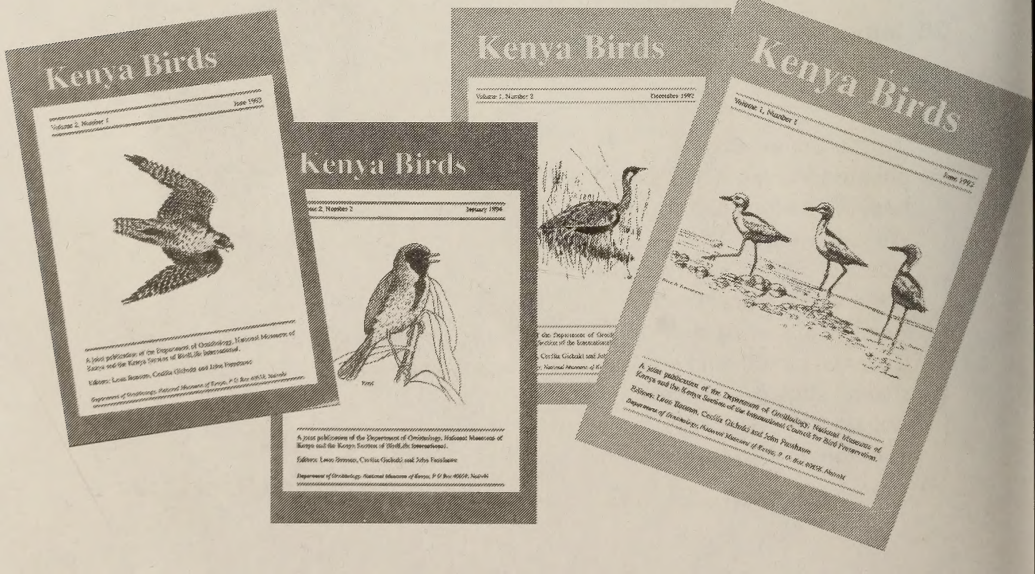
by Leon Bennun

On my desk is a slim green-bordered volume. *Kenya Birds* volume 1 number 1: published June 1992, ten years ago, and just 24 pages long. On the front a trio of black and white Crab-plovers parade towards the left margin. Articles inside continue the coastal theme: Arabuko-Sokoke, Mida Creek and the Spotted Ground Thrush. There's news from the Ornithology Department, ICBP Kenya Section and the Kenya Wetlands Working Group. Many familiar names sprinkle the pages, along with others that are half forgotten. It's a little piece of birding history, a time-capsule of Kenyan ornithology and bird conservation a decade past.

John Fanshawe and I had the idea for this magazine during one of our endless, and endlessly absorbing, conversations on the future of Kenya's birds. At the time John was running a BirdLife project down at Arabuko-Sokoke, and working madly to collect data for his doctorate. I was recently installed at the National Museums, and already dragging about with me far more commitments than I could ever hope to service. Looking back, perhaps it wasn't a very smart move to plunge into a brand-new bird magazine. In fact, there's no 'perhaps' about it.

But we were both ten years younger then, and much more energetic. And of course it seemed like a good idea at the time. We sensed there was a huge latent enthusiasm for birds and conservation – a network just waiting to be connected and made to spark. *Kenya Birds* was going to do the connecting, and maintain the spark.

Did we succeed? In part, maybe. In the last decade there *has* been an explosion of birding interest among



Ten Years On

leon.bennun@birdlife.org.uk

younger people in Kenya. *Kenya Birds* is surely an ingredient among many in the complex brew of factors bringing this about. Yet the magazine's core readership has not expanded much in number over the years. It still speaks to a fairly small (though undoubtedly special and important) set of people.

Perhaps this doesn't matter, since turning out *Kenya Birds* has always been a labour of love. From the moment of its conception we ran up smack against voluntarism's First Law: those with the skills never have the time. Never? Well... hardly ever. The twelve issues following number one merge in memory into a single blur of all-night sessions, spent fighting sleep and the quirky annoyances of PageMaker. Somehow each one got done, usually months, occasionally years, late. The patience of our long-suffering readers has been remarkable. I hated having to test that patience time after time.

Now *Kenya Birds* must broaden its appeal to a wider audience: all Nature Kenya's members. As I step down as joint editor I'm delighted to be handing this responsibility over to someone who has both tremendous knowledge of birds and conservation, and an exceptional flair for making that knowledge accessible - Fleur Ng'weno. Heading a talented editorial team, Fleur will be keeping the best in *Kenya Birds* and making it even better.

To everyone who supported *Kenya Birds* in its first decade, in many various ways, great thanks – and please continue. To Fleur and her team, very good luck. And to all readers – so long, and good birding!

Letter from the Editor

Welcome to this issue of *Kenya Birds*. I hope you will enjoy reading it.

First and foremost, I would like to thank Leon Bennun, who had the vision for this magazine, and put countless hours, days, weeks and months of work into making it a reality. Leon led the transformation of Nature Kenya – the East Africa Natural History Society and BirdLife in Kenya – into a vibrant conservation organisation, and made the Department of Ornithology at the National Museum a centre for Kenyan ornithologists to train, develop, carry out research and contribute to our knowledge of birds, their values and their conservation. We wish Leon continued vision and success in his work as Director of Science and Policy at BirdLife International.

Many thanks also to the staff at the Department of Ornithology, and to all those who assisted to edit the magazine and to analyse and process the records. In particular, thanks to the artists who have so generously allowed us to use their work in the magazine.

This is a catch-up issue. The last *Kenya Birds* was Volume 8, number 1, published in July 2000. As you are all too aware, no. 2 did not see the light of day, and both issues of 2001 are late. As a result we have agreed to call this issue Volume 9, numbers 1 and 2 of 2001, although it is published in August 2002.

Volume 9 covers most records from 1999 to October 2001. Articles and short notes sent in by readers, research news and reports on activities will be fitted into this issue and the next as space allows.

Contributors, please do not be discouraged! If your note or article does not appear in this issue, look for it in the next one! Better yet, send me another copy, to be sure that it is on hand. It is hoped that Volume 10 of 2002 will be out early next year.

Fleur Ng'weno
fleur@africaonline.co.ke

Birding in Ewaso Narok Swamp, Rumuruti, a dryland swamp

by Thuita Thenya, Department of Geography, University of Nairobi
tthenya@yahoo.co.uk

Ewaso Narok swamp is a riverine papyrus swamp, formed as a result of extensive flooding of the Eng'are Narok river valley at Rumuruti. The swamp is about 14 km long with associated features extending for about 20 km. It is located in the western part of Laikipia District, in semi-arid Rumuruti Division. Rainfall is below 750 mm per year, with evaporation being twice the precipitation. The swamp has its main catchment in the Aberdares with Lake Ol Bolossat contributing a significant amount of water. The other major rivers feeding Ewaso Narok swamp are the Pesi, contributing about 30% of the water volume entering the swamp, and the seasonal Muruku and Aiyam rivers.

For a long time, the main land use in Laikipia district has been nomadic pastoralism and ranching, but since the 1970s there has been a shift in land use from large scale to small-scale land holdings with increased cultivation along the rivers fronts, combined with water abstraction for dryland irrigation. This has resulted in some wetland drainage and clearance of riverine vegetation.

The first attempt to drain Ewaso Narok swamp was done in 1945 when two canals were dug, on either side of the swamp.

How to get there & where to stay

The simplest route, suitable even for small cars, is via the Nairobi-Nyahururu-Rumuruti road, which is tarmac up to Rumuruti shopping centre, next to the swamp. An alternative is the Nairobi-Karatina-Nanyuki-Ol-Pajeta-Rumuruti route. This is tarmac up to Nanyuki town, from where a dry weather road begins. This is a rough drive, although with interesting scenery and wildlife, and a 4WD vehicle is strongly recommended. Driving around the swamp involves much off-road driving, through bushes and rough terrain where only a 4WD can manage.

There are two pleasant campsites along the Sosian/Maralal road. Bobong campsite is about 20 kms from Rumuruti shopping centre on the Maralal road. Directions to the camp are on a piece or rock on the right hand side of the road, about 400 metres beyond a container that has been converted to a house. Turn left, driving about 200m up to a rocky outcrop overlooking the swamp. From the top there is a bird's eye view of the surroundings. Camping is Kshs 250 per night, with piped water, hot showers and well-sheltered fireplaces. There are also two bandas with beds for hire for Kshs 350 per person per night. Food

and drinks can be obtained from the camp, and there is a resident caretaker.

Contact Ol Maisor Ranch for bookings: John and Amanda Perrett, or Jasper Evans, phone 0176 32718 or 0176 31233 or e-mail olmaisor@africaonline.co.ke (Alternative contact is Laikipia Wildlife Forum office, lwf@africaonline.co.ke or phone 0176 31600.)

The next campsite is "The Fish Ponds", about 28 kms from Rumuruti on the right-hand side of the Maralal road, a few kilometers from the Sosian shopping centre. The camp is at the northern tip of the Ewaso Narok swamp, still on Ol Maisor Ranch. It is situated between the swamp and two large ponds of water, with basic camping for Kshs 200 per person per night, under a canopy of large *Acacia xanthophloea* trees. Check for directions to the campsite from a huge rock on the right hand side of the road. Overlooking the Hippo Pond are two bandas with a fully equipped and furnished open kitchen/lounge for self-catering parties for Kshs 3,000 per night per party. There is a resident caretaker also here.

Camels can be hired from the Ranch for Kshs 750 per day, and some of the camel handlers belong to the Bobong Bird Club. An ox cart or bicycles are alternative forms of transport, available for hire for Kshs 500 per day from Bobong Campsite. Driving around on the Ranch is prohibited.

Accommodation is also available in Nyahururu town about 30 km away.

The area tends to have hot days and cold nights, and warm clothing is a must for the early morning's birding. Gum boots come in handy when the ground is waterlogged, although light shoes will do in the dry season. You should carry enough water and food as shops are some distance away.

Interesting sites

A day started on the south-western side, along the dry valley of the Muruku river, usually proves very worthwhile. The 'valley' is a gently rolling ground, easily accessed by turning right before entering Rumuruti shopping centre, going past Rumuruti State House, over the Eng'are Narok river bridge and past G.G. Secondary School. Avoid this section if there are heavy rains, as it can become heavily flooded. It soon becomes a rough terrain of rocky outcrops and thickets of *Croton dichogamous*. No definite roads exist here. The swamp edge is marked by a line of *Acacia xanthophloea* trees. The entrance of the Muruku river into the swamp is a good site for Black-winged Plovers and Grey Crowned Cranes, and a variety of plovers and sandpipers in the migration season.

When it is not very wet, it is possible to drive through the Muruku dry valley to the confluence of the Pesi and Engare Narok rivers. The *Acacia* trees along the edges are likely to be dotted with roosting Sacred Ibis, herons and cranes in the early hours of the morning. Later in the day Vervet Monkeys and (if you are lucky) Patas Monkeys, although rare, may be found

Black-headed Heron
by Nani Croze

here. At the confluence you are likely to be welcomed by a variety of widowbirds, bishops and waxbills, including White-winged, Long-tailed, and Jackson's Widowbirds and Yellow and Yellow-crowned Bishops. The terrain here may be muddy.

Concentrate on the Eng'are Narok arm of the swamp. The hippos here hardly ever emerge during the day, but it is obviously wise to be on the alert. Try to keep to the hardly visible tracks to avoid acacia thorns. A line of squatters' huts line the edge of the swamp, but the people have been unable to drain this part of the swamp due to heavy flooding in the rainy season. This section of the swamp has islands inside, and local people will guide you if requested.

To get to the north-eastern side of the swamp, drive back to GG secondary school and then turn left, taking the first turn to the left again over bushes of *Acacia seyal* and over the Pesi River bridge. Here, one drives through *Acacia* wooded grassland where Kori and Black-bellied Bustards may be spotted. Drive past the Thome shops and take the route about 500m beyond what appears to be the end of the swamp (if in doubt ask at the shopping centre).

The distance between the 1945 canal, dug to help take water to the lower tip of the swamp, and the swamp itself is about 500 m, most of it being a drawdown area dominated by *Aeschynomene schimperi* and other water's edge plants. Here you may find Yellow-crowned Bishop, White-winged and

Jackson's Widowbirds and Grey Crowned Crane. There are numerous canals, which you could easily drop into, so move carefully! Buffalo footprints are often conspicuous. Like the hippos, these creatures rarely emerge from the swamp during the day, but it is sensible to be on the lookout. Abandoned houses here tell tales of occasional flooding, which destroys crops and homes. This is an important grazing area, especially during the dry season.

The western side

To reach the western side of the swamp, go back to Rumuruti shopping centre and past it to the Sosian-Maralal road. Access to the swamp on this side is only possible through private farms so courtesy should be exercised. An interesting site to visit here is the uppermost part of the swamp where access is through a private farm immediately after Rumuruti shopping centre. Once again, this is off-road driving along a narrow track bordered by *Acacia* and leleshwa (*Tarchonanthus*) bushes. Look for a section to cross the canal after driving for about 100m. African Fish Eagles, ducks, snipes and warblers are likely to be found in this area of bushed swamp. Bushbuck also live here but are very hard to see. The adjacent dry land bordering the papyrus holds a good variety of bush birds like White-bellied Go-Away Birds.

You may spot Brown Parrots, Verreaux's Eagle Owl and other birds along the riparian vegetation in the 1945 canal. When the path starts guiding you left and up to the Maralal road, stop and you may cross over the canal and onto the swamp. Be on the lookout for hippos, although they will normally warn you before you get too close to their location.

Back on the main Maralal road, turn right and drive on towards Sosian shopping centre, leaving Bobong campsite behind. Spectacular rocky outcrops fringe the road on the left hand side. The next stop might be Hippo Pond, a comfortable place for bird watching, camping and picnics! This site is especially good in the evening; it is a roosting site for numerous waterbirds, and the *Acacia* trees are dotted with white objects at night, although the hippos, African Darter and some storks are here throughout the day. Helmeted Guineafowl and baboons at times come in large numbers in the evening.

What does the future hold for this wetland? This is the lifeline of the Samburu area, supporting diverse and unique biodiversity in the Samburu-Buffalo Springs and Shaba National Reserves. Unfortunately, the wetland is currently heavily threatened due to habitat destruction and fragmentation by invading farmers on both side of the swamp. During the dry season, the size of the swamp is significantly reduced due to grazing, upstream water abstraction for small-scale irrigation, and the clearance of swamp vegetation to pave way for cultivation. This is accompanied by a high usage of pesticides, which are at times used to poison birds like Greater Blue-eared Starling that feed on crops such as tomatoes. At present the swamp is able

to renew itself during most rainy seasons. However, with the increasing human movement into the rangelands of Laikipia District, and the accompanying demand for land and water, the future of this wetland looks bleak. This poses a challenge for the conservation of wetlands in drylands regions, and biodiversity in general, in a scenario of increasing demand for farming land. For instance, Pesi and Marura swamps and other small wetlands in upper Ewaso Ngiro north drainage basin have been drained for farming. This jeopardises the ecological functions of dryland wetlands.

Kori Bustard by Nani Croze

RUMOURS OF RUMA

by Sir Jeffrey James

Not many people seem to have heard of Ruma National Park. Even fewer seem to have been there. Indeed, I had only met a handful. But to the birder, it means the most likely place to catch up with that elusive and mysterious visitor, the Blue Swallow.

So it was that, on 29 July 2000, we found ourselves checking in at the park gate. No, said the ranger, no Blue Swallows. And he was right. Hours of driving through the tall grass, and not a sniff. But there was another, even more elusive, possibility. On the grapevine, I had heard faint rumours of a certain rare cisticola, seen by unknown birders, at unknown times, somewhere in Ruma.

Every obliging cisticola was duly studied, and dismissed as a Rattler, or more often, indeterminate. But suddenly there was this most considerate bird, perched high on a plant stem, above the grass. The first impression was of a bird in perfect condition - fresh, bright plumage, not a worn feather in sight, quite stunning. Smaller and more compact than all those Rattlers.

Then the detailed study, taking in the features one by one. The back was predominantly matt black, with a rufous streak either side of centre, and a few whitish lines. The head had dark, broad stripes above the supercilium and on the crown, with pale buff stripes in between, all faintly marked with darker streaks. The nape was dark rufous, thinly streaked with black. Most co-operatively, the bird changed position, revealing a bright, white throat and buffy white underparts separated by a thin, buff breast band, wider and more distinct at the shoulders, but fading away in the centre. But just look at those flanks, bright rufous. And the tail, nothing like your average cisticola, medium length, but thin, square-ended, with a just discernible notch, matt black with a white tip right across its breadth, and clear signs of a rufous rump. Sure enough, as our bird eventually flew away, the rump showed rich rufous. The cisticola kept his silence, but it was one of the nicest I'd ever seen, if not heard.

It simply had to be the Black-backed Cisticola of Ruma legend! Renewed consultation with the field guides increased the pulse rate. Notes were scribbled down. Then reality dawned. Who on earth was going to believe this one, a cisticola of all things?

Anyway, a description is duly written up and sent off to Leon Bennun. A cautious, non-committal e-mail tells me that it has been passed to Don Turner to see what he makes of it. A few weeks' silence, then Leon is back online to say that Don has confirmed the record as a non-breeding, adult Black-backed Cisticola. What is more, it is the first written description from Kenya for over 80 years. Who produced the last, I wonder? But most exciting to be

...CONFIRMED!

Blue Swallow by Andrew Kamiti

making history, and to have brought fresh news of one of Kenya's rarest residents.

Meanwhile, another expedition to Ruma had already been arranged for 5-6 October 2000, to have another crack at both the swallow and the cisticola. First, we saw a herd of 32 roan antelope, the reason for Ruma's existence as a National Park and almost the entire Kenya population. This time, though, not a sign of the cisticola, despite the tempting mist nets. But on the first evening, in fading light after rain, several swallows appeared, hawking rapidly over the grass. Some good views, and enough to make it all worth while. The next day, an hour earlier in good light, we came across an amazing sight by the airstrip, a cluster of more than a dozen Blue Swallows resting on tall plants, one or two fluffing out their white side patches. A sweep round with the binoculars produced a count of 50 plus, quartering the plains, and there must have been many more. A great end to the day.

Ruma is a little gem, grasslands and bush nestling peacefully in a valley between gentle hills. The birdlife generally is rich and, joy of joys, you can get out of the car and walk. Other highlights included a close encounter with a Trilling Cisticola, heard but not seen in the bushy hillside, and a series of Black Coucals, glimpsed at first but eventually producing good views. They must be ten a penny, if you can only get them to come out and stay out. We also came across a Common Button-quail

out in the open on the track, unworried by our presence - maybe not a surprise given the perfect habitat, but seemingly out of its recorded range.

One of the main charms of Ruma is the almost total absence of human beings, apart from the occasional ranger. It is all yours. But it desperately needs more visitors and more attention to help it survive the growing pressure from agricultural development all around. Remoteness is a deterrent - 6-7 hours by car from Nairobi, 3 hours from Kisumu, the last hour from Homa Bay over a pretty rough road.

Accommodation too is a problem - or used to be. If you can't wangle a bed at the ICIPE Research Centre at Mbita Point, there is now the recently opened Lake Victoria Safari Village at Mbita, run by a Norwegian called Odd (sic). It offers bandas on the shore of Lake Victoria, and good birding in the grounds. You never know, you might just see an Orange Weaver. The National Park is about an hour's drive away. So why not try a long weekend, and give Ruma the chance it deserves.

Contact for Lake Victoria Safari Village: telephone 0385 22182 (Loice) or 0385 22218 (Odd) or fax 0385 22190
e-mail bredo@mbita.mimcom.net or odd@safarikenya.net
web page www.safarikenya.net

Surprise Visit

Nakuru National Park, 17 September 2000, 8 a.m. Car stopped in middle of a great herd of buffalo. Clients standing up in roof hatch, watching quietly. Both wearing dark green jackets. Our arrival disturbed the many Yellow-billed Oxpeckers, and those closest to us flew up into adjacent trees.

Then, without hesitation, three oxpeckers flew down and landed on the back of one of the dark green jackets, much to the consternation of the wearer! Mistake soon realised, the birds flew off – but their visit was a further indication of how so many forms of wildlife have chosen to accept a car, properly driven, as just another "occupant" of our National Parks!

Peter Davey, PO Box 41822, Nairobi, kikoken@africaonline.co.ke

Bird Committee News

Bernd de Bruijn bernddebruijn@hotmail.com

In these times full of evaluations, reorganisations and so on, the Bird Committee has not escaped the (s)urge of reflecting on objectives and activities. We found that some things could be improved by offering a structure in which Committee members could use their scarce time more effectively. This has resulted in three subcommittees: one for records, one for funds disbursement and one for publications. We would like to give you some more information on what these subcommittees are about.

Records subcommittee

Note: Records are observations of birds worth noting for some reason – nesting or feeding young, in unusually large numbers, early or late migrants, new or rare or seldom seen in a particular area, or with interesting behaviour.

Due to a combination of a high turnover in both Bird Committee members and Department of Ornithology (DoO) staff and a high workload of both, the processing of records has been lagging behind over the last few years. While working through last World Birdwatch records with an 'ad hoc' task force, it became clear that this issue could be tackled by having a core group of both BC members and DoO staff (the Records subcommittee), which would work on the records on a regular basis, and at the same time streamline the structure for receiving, processing, filing and publishing records.

From the outside, for the observer who submits his/her records (and everyone should!), not much will change, apart of course from the quicker handling and publishing of records and more efficient feedback or queries where necessary. Below we summarise the main points:

Variable Sunbird by Andrew Kamiti

- the DoO will be the central address for submitting records (rather than Nature Kenya). At the DoO the records will be gathered, under the responsibility of the records officer;
- records coming in through other sources, such as Nature Kenya (including the Hotline), will be forwarded to DoO;

• the Records subcommittee will vet and process all records on a monthly basis;

• deadline for every month will be the Bird Committee meeting on the first Thursday of each month, so interesting records can be discussed and eventually forwarded to that month's Nature Net Hotline.

Processing of records consists of:

1. vetting and querying records if necessary;
2. forwarding observations of rarities to the Rarities Committee (a standard form for submitting rarities is currently being designed);
3. updating the Bird Atlas of Kenya and the related database;
4. preparing new atlas records for publication and forwarding these to editors of *Kenya Birds*;
5. preparing interesting recent records to appear in Hotline, *Scopus* and African Bird Club bulletin.

Planned future activities of the Records subcommittee are restructuring the database, in order to facilitate analysis, and a review and update of the Check-list of the Birds of Kenya.

To submit records, use the following addresses:

Department of Ornithology, NMK
P.O. Box 40658
00100 Nairobi, Kenya

e-mail: kbirds@africaonline.co.ke

Please submit your records! Every single observation can be a contribution to knowledge about and conservation of our birds! Remember to include the date, location and habitat of your observation, and your name and contacts. Blank checklists, forms for monitoring of IBAs and Nest Record Cards can be obtained free from the Nature Kenya office.

Funds disbursement subcommittee

This subcommittee handles the Bird Committee funds. Some funds are designated for research and monitoring of vulnerable bird species and their habitats, through the Department of Ornithology; others support, for instance, the Wednesday Morning Birdwalks and the publication of *Kenya Birds*. A number of funds are open to applications and therefore we would like to give these special attention:

Andrew Kamiti

Binoculars Fund

The Binoculars Fund supports guides who are active in Important Bird Areas to obtain quality binoculars. This fund, a generous donation of Sir Jeffrey James, former British High Commissioner to Kenya, aims to improve identification skills, which will have a positive effect on guiding and monitoring activities. The beneficiary, who can choose from a number of binoculars of different quality and price range, pays one third of the costs and the fund will cover the remaining two thirds. New is that the beneficiary can also apply for a copy of *Birds of Kenya and Northern Tanzania* by Zimmerman, Turner and Pearson (the 'large' edition) for one third of the price!

Bursary Fund

The Bursary Fund is designated to support high school education of promising pupils who are engaged in conservation activities related to an Important Bird Area. Through this support we try to improve opportunities for young people within communities to become involved in conservation, from which in turn the IBA may benefit in the future. Currently, the fund supports a beneficiary who is active in the Kingangop grasslands IBA.

Small Grants Fund

Currently, the Small Grants fund has run out. It is hoped that additional funding will be found in future. In the past, the proposals received by the Bird Committee covered very varied topics and often lacked sufficient quality to obtain funding. Therefore the Committee decided this fund will be geared more to the activities of Site Support Groups in the Important Bird Areas Programme in future. By doing so, we can ensure better that the funded activities tie in with our objectives. A good example is the most recent project (and, for the time being, the last one) that received support: a school outreach programme carried out by the Lake Victoria Sunset Birders, the local SSG, about conservation of papyrus habitat and its special bird communities.

Applications guidelines for these funds can be obtained from the Nature Kenya office.

Publications subcommittee

Publish or perish! This well-known adage illustrates that no matter how much work you do, if you do not publish it, no one will know! Therefore publications are a very important means of keeping people informed and involved. However, publishing is also a demanding job and not a few editors 'perished' in the attempt, along with the publications. The backlog in the Bird Committee's publications, such as *Kenya Birds*, is something we are taking very seriously; a publications subcommittee is now in place to ensure a more regular appearance in future. Its aims are:

- to produce the magazine *Kenya Birds* and the scientific journal *Scopus*;
- to produce checklists for different areas in the region; work is ongoing on checklists for the National Museum in Nairobi and Meru National Park;
- to develop the East Africa bird checklist.

ORNITHOLOGY DEPARTMENT NEWS

Strategic planning is also guiding the Department of Ornithology of the National Museums of Kenya. In December 2001, the Department of Ornithology held its strategic planning workshop at Elsamere Field Studies Centre, Naivasha. The workshop was fully sponsored by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), the BirdLife Partner in the UK. It brought together all members of staff (including those on study leave), research associates and friends of the Department. In the end, a five-year strategic plan was developed to guide the operations of the Department over the next five years.

Staff and students

In 2001 and early 2002 the Department experienced major staff changes. Dr. Leon Bennun (the Head of Department for the last decade) left the National Museums of Kenya to join BirdLife International as Director for Science and Policy. We congratulate him for his new position at BirdLife. We are glad to say that the National Museums of Kenya has offered him Research Associate status, and he will continue to be involved in the Department's activities. Mr. Alfred Owino has taken over as new Head of Department in an acting capacity.

Mr. Oliver Nasirwa (immediate former Waterbird Census Coordinator) left the Department in 2001 to join the World Wide Fund for Nature as a project officer at Lake Bogoria. However, he has since left WWF to join Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, UK, as eastern Africa region Darwin Project Officer. Ms. Jean Githaiga (immediate former Departmental database manager) also left the Department to take up a new job in South Africa.

Replacements for Leon's and Oliver's skills may not be an easy task. However, attempts have been made to fill the gaps. Ronald Mulwa, John Musina, Kariuki Ndang'ang'a and Samuel Muchai have since been recruited and are settling in well in their new positions. Fabian Musila and Steven Wamiti have been recruited as Important Bird Areas Research Fellows. In addition, the Department recruited new interns. Philista Malaki, Simon Nganda Musila and Nickson Otieno have joined the Department as Research Interns.

George Amutete successfully completed his postgraduate study at the University of Cape Town. Ronald Mulwa and Fabian Musila successfully defended their theses at Kenyatta and Nairobi Universities respectively. Mwangi Githiru (White-starred Forest Robin) and Daina Samba (Taita Apalis) are all through with fieldwork and now analyzing data and writing up their theses.

Ringing

The Nairobi Ringing Group continues to make considerable progress in its activities. The group has attracted more enthusiastic young Kenyans interested in acquiring basic skills in bird ringing, thanks to the support the group continues to get from the Bird Committee of the EANHS and the Ringing scheme for eastern Africa coordinator. In 2002 the group received financial boosts from the Kenya Museum Society and the Rufford Foundation of the UK. It is hoped that through this support, the group will be able to expand its operations to include training members of some Important Bird Areas Site Support Groups.

Projects

During 2001 and early 2002, the Department continued to attract new projects and research collaborators both locally and internationally. Some projects were also completed during the period.

Over the next three years, beginning July 2002, the Department will be hosting the East Africa Wetlands Monitoring Scheme – the eastern Africa region Darwin Initiative funded project through Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, UK. The project will focus on capacity building and database management for waterbird monitoring in eastern African countries. We feel honoured to host this regional project

The Grey-capped Social Weaver study the Department does in collaboration with Cornell University, US, continued in 2001 and 2002. The study is already revealing some interesting results on the sociobiology of the species. The next field session is planned or April 2003.

Congratulations to Fred Barasa and George Eshiamwata (both Parisoma Project), and Bernard Amakobe (White-starred Forest Robin) for successfully completing fieldworks. Both projects have come to an end, and preliminary analyses are in progress.

New research reports

The following research reports appeared between 2001 and early 2002:

No. 39: *Monitoring of waterbirds in Kenya, July 2000 and January 2001* (Owino A. & Nasirwa O.) 2001

No. 40: *Surveys of Hinde's Babbler Turdoides hindei and Northern Pied Babbler T. hypoleucus in four Important Bird Areas* (Shaw P., Musina J. & Gichuki P.) 2001

No. 41: *Responding to the Asian vulture crisis: Planning for vulture monitoring and conservation in Kenya* (Bennun L. & Virani M.) 2001.

No. 42: *A survey of Hinde's Babbler Turdoides hindei at five sites, June-July 2001* (Shaw P., Gichuki P., Musina J) 2002

No. 43: *Preliminary avifaunal survey in the lower Tana River Forests: Baomo South, Maroni West, Maroni East and Kipende West* (Mulwa R. & Owino. A.) 2002.

No. 44: *A preliminary avifaunal survey of the Mau Narok/Molo Grasslands, Kenya* (Kariuki N. & Mulwa R.) 2002

No. 45: *Monitoring waterbirds in Kenya, July 2001 and January 2002* (Owino, A) 2002.

These reports (including other previous reports in the series) are available at Nature Kenya

Carmine Bee-eater Influx, 1998

Githurai, Nairobi

Githurai (aka Kimbo alias Githurai 45), in the northern outskirts of Nairobi, was a birders' delight following the El Niño rains of 1997-98. In spite of congestion, filth and disturbance, we recorded exciting bird species in Githurai and adjacent acacia grassland – one new for the Nairobi list!

On 26 December 1998, heading to the open plains on the eastern side of Githurai, our gaze was attracted to four large reddish-looking bee-eaters launching themselves from a power cable to catch insects in the air. Carmine Bee-eaters! We watched the small flock for about 45 minutes. The area is predominantly acacia grassland, overgrazed and interspersed with shrubs and bushes The short rains were over and the area was dry.

The El Niño rains of 1997-98 formed many wetlands in Githurai, mostly in abandoned construction sites, ditches and excavations. The wetlands were rich in noisy frogs, water snails and other forms of amphibious life, which attracted large populations of Sacred and Hadada Ibis, Black-headed and Grey Herons. Once we saw a group of 41 Hamerkop. The clay mines along Thika Road next to the Clayworks factory were filled with water, and created a dam about 2 km square, with an island overgrown by reeds, mostly *Typha*. On 3rd January 1999, we witnessed the spectacle of birds coming to roost. We counted 920 Cattle Egrets, 400 Great and Long-tailed Cormorants, 28 Sacred Ibis, 15 Egyptian Goose, 1 Common Sandpiper and 2 Western Reef Heron. The reef herons were lifers for us, spotted accidentally while counting the egrets. When the birds were flushed by a Eurasian Marsh Harrier, we noted the yellow feet and all dark ashy grey body and whitish face of the reef herons.

Onesmas Kabindi and Joyce Kageci
onesmas@africaonline.co.ke

Kongoni, Naivasha

Date of observation: 27 December 1998
Location: Near Kongoni Farm and Kongoni Police Station, on the South Lake Road, Naivasha; map reference 36.13 E and 0.44 S.
Habitat: Cattle paddocks in riparian Acacia woodland
Weather: Bright sunlight at about 4:30 p.m., in very dry weather.
Optical equipment: None, as I was coming from work when I saw the bird. It allowed me to get very close and observe it really well. I saw the bird both in flight and at rest on a nearby post.
Description: A slender bee-eater about the size of a wood hoopoe.
Colours: Deep red and blue in different parts of the body, with a kind of mask over the head and chin. It was very active whilst chasing its prey, giving very good views of the blue rump and the long central tail feathers. The chin was blue, the upper chest light carmine.
Beak: The bill was typical bee-eater shape and about one and a half times the diameter of the head.
Remarks: According to Britton, 1980, "The race *nubicoides* is a non-breeding visitor from the south ... and there are records of single birds at ... Kedong in southern Kenya in July" while Zimmerman et al, 1996, note that the race *nubicus* is "occasional in bushed grassland and cultivation in south-eastern Kenya and some Rift Valley localities." My observation of the race *nubicus* shows that the two races may overlap a little at the limits of their range.

References:

Britton, P.L. (ed) 1980. *Birds of East Africa, their habitat, status and distribution*. Nairobi: EANHS

Zimmerman, D.A., Turner, D.A., Pearson, D.J. 1996. *Birds of Kenya and Northern Tanzania*, A & C Black, London.

Andrew Odhiambo, South Lake Bird Watchers
Box 61, Sulmac, Naivasha

Vulture Restaurant at Hell s Gate

by Simon Thomsett
simonthomsett@yahoo.com

Sounds like a horror film? Yes, but in fact it is a wildlife-viewing innovation at an accessible National Park. A vulture restaurant is a place where vultures and other birds of prey are fed. A hide is placed near the feeding place to allow visitors a close view. The "restaurant" is managed to ensure that no bird develops a dependency on the food source; only a very small amount of food is placed for the raptors, and usually comes from wild animals found dead, or from meat bought at the butcher's. Its main purpose is to educate the public about raptor conservation. The Hell's Gate "restaurant" also helped to manage the release of captive-bred Lammergeiers, although they are no longer seen there.

In November 2000, the raptor restaurant was formally opened at Hell's Gate National Park. Guests included the Senior Warden, Anne Kahihia (now at Nakuru), the Nakuru Warden, Catherine Wekesa (now at Hell's Gate), the community warden, G. Irangi, Dr. Leon Bennun from the National Museums of Kenya, Yilma Delegen of IUCN, and local representatives including Martin Mwangi of KenGen, Peter Robertson, Sarah Higgins and the late Mervyn Cameley.

White-fronted Bee-eater, characteristic of Rift Valley, by Andrew Kamiti

To book a seat at the restaurant, contact the Senior Warden at Hell's Gate, Catherine Wekesa, phone 0311-20284, a few days ahead of time, so that food can be availed. The maximum number the hide can reasonably hold is five people. Visitors pay a small charge and collect the key at the Elsa Gate, then drive to the hide hidden up in the hills away from the normal public routes. Here the visitors enter a small tunnel that leads down to a sunken concrete hide that is almost invisible from the outside. Three one-way glass panels give a magnificent view of the park, and of raptors from as little as two metres away.

However, "service" may be slow; visitors may wait up to three hours for birds of prey to land at the feeding site. So carry some food and drink as well as binoculars and camera. The best time to visit the hide is 7:30 to 10:30 a.m. Raptors most often seen are Augur Buzzard, Verreaux's Eagle, and Lanner and Peregrine falcons.

IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS SITE SUPPORT GROUPS and their CONTACTS

Group	Contacts	Physical Address	Contact Person
Arabuko-Sokoke Forest Guides Association (ASFGA)	P O Box 1, Gede via Malindi Tel: 0122-32462 e-mail: crownedc@yahoo.com	KWS Station, Gede	Alex Mwalimu
Site Conservation Intern North Coast	e-mail: crownedc@yahoo.com		Ann Mwaura
Kakamega Environmental Education Programme (KEEP)	P. O. Box 2731, Kakamega Keeporg@yahoo.com Tel: 0722-619150	Isecheno Forest Station Kakamega Forest	Wilberforce Okeka
Site Conservation Intern Kakamega Forest IBA	P. O. Box 2731, Kakamega Tel: 0733-563213	Isecheno Forest Station Kakamega Forest	Leonard Likhotio
Friends of Kinangop Plateau (FoKP) Engineer branch	P. O. Box 30, North Kinangop	Engineer Township Kinangop	Eliud Wairiuko
FOKP – Murungaru branch	P. O. Box 265, Naivasha	Murungaru town. North Kinangop	Joachim Kaiiru
FOKP – South branch	P. O. Box 174, S. Kinangop	Njabini Township South Kinangop	Lucy Ndegwa
Site Conservation Intern Kinangop grasslands IBA	P. O. Box 174, S. Kinangop	Njabini Township South Kinangop	Francis Muigai
Kijabe Environment Volunteers (KENVO)	P. O. Box 49, Matathia	Kereita Forest Station	Peter Manji
Lake Victoria Sunset Birders (LVSB)	Birders@africaonline.com *or* Evansmkalla@hotmail.com WCK P. O. Box 4201, Kisumu Tel: (035) 42952	WCK Office Kisumu	Francis Omondi Or Evans Mkalla (WCK)
Oserian Wildlife Club (OWC)	P. O. Box 209 Naivasha	Oserian Flowers Ltd, Naivasha	Peter Njoroge
South Lake Conservation Group (SLCG)	P. O. Box 61, Suimac, Naivasha Tel: 0311-30008 Mobile: 0733-858955	Fisherman's Top Camp, Naivasha	Isaac Oloo
Mukurwe-ini Environment Volunteers (MEVO)	C/o John Chege, Muhito Pri. Sch, P O Box 14 Mukurwe-ini Tel: 0171-60359	Wajee Camp Mukurwe-ini	Lazarus Kariuki
Site Conservation Intern Mukurwe-ini IBA	Tel: 0722-440366	Wajee Camp Mukurwe-ini	John Chege
South Nandi Biodiversity Conservation Group (SONABIC)	P.O. Box 26, Kapcheno	Kabujoi Forest Sta. South Nandi	Wilson Towett
Site Conservation Intern South Nandi IBA	P.O. Box 26, Kapcheno	Kabujoi Forest Sta. South Nandi	Joel Siele

Important Bird Areas Programme for Kenya

by Dan Omolo, Nature Kenya

The Important Bird Areas (IBA) Programme of BirdLife International identifies sites of outstanding importance for biodiversity conservation, using information on birds applied in an objective and standard way. IBAs have already been identified and continental directories published in Europe, the Middle East and, recently, Africa. IBA work in Kenya began in 1995 with surveys and compilation of information. Sixty IBAs were identified in Kenya and a directory published in 1998.

Nature Kenya, in collaboration with the Ornithology Department of the National Museum of Kenya, has been co-ordinating a programme of monitoring, advocacy and conservation action at Kenya's IBAs, with support from the Global Environment Facility through the United Nations Development Programme (GEF/UNDP), the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and more recently, the Darwin Initiative.

Site Action

At site level, the IBA programme is working to implement community-driven intervention programmes with community-based Site Support Groups (SSGs). These include education and awareness, species and habitat monitoring, and implementation of environmentally friendly income generating activities, amongst others. Twelve SSGs have been established and are active in eight IBAs (see table). The SSGs are implementing various site projects and activities. For example, Kakamega Environmental Education Programme (KEEP) are implementing a GEF-Small Grants Project of US$ 50,000 on community development and capacity building; Kijabe Environment Volunteers (KENVO) are currently implementing a BP Conservation Award of UK£ 20,000 on a Kikuyu Escarpment Community Outreach Programme.

The table on the facing page gives the names and contacts of IBA Site Support Groups, and IBA interns where applicable. Do contact the groups when you visit these important bird areas; group members can guide you to interesting sites.

Advocacy and Networking

At national level, the programme is working with over 27 Government Institutions, NGOs, Universities and other private and civil society organisations through the National Liaison Committee (NLC) that plays an advisory role for the project. The drafting of a National Important Bird

Areas Conservation Strategy (NIBACS) was possible through a multi-disciplinary involvement of NLC institutions. Nature Kenya also sits in other national committees such as the sub-committee on biodiversity of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Environment (IMCE), National Wetlands Committee and the Kenya Forest Working Group (KFWG), amongst others. Nature Kenya has also contributed to various policy formulation processes, such as the National Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan (NBSAP), the draft Forest Bill 2002, the Environmental Co-ordination and Management Act (EMCA), the National Wetlands Conservation and Management Policy and the Constitutional Review Process.

International Impact

Nature Kenya is active at regional and international level through the BirdLife International Partnership. IBA project staff have participated in the meetings and deliberations of international conventions such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), African Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA), the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the Convention on Trade and Endangered Species (CITES) and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). Over US$ 300,000 in additional funds have been leveraged for IBA activities through local and international fundraising initiatives. Nature Kenya's contribution to biodiversity issues has been recognised by the Kenya Government. Paul

Matiku, the Executive Director, was part of the Kenya Government delegation to the 5th meeting of the parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity in Nairobi in 2000 and the 6th meeting in the Netherlands in 2002, as well as subsidiary meetings.

IBA Advocacy and Awareness Materials

The following advocacy and awareness materials were produced through the IBA Programme, and are available at the Nature Kenya office.

- Important Bird Areas in Kenya *(Kshs. 1,000)*
- From Important Bird Areas to Important Biodiversity Areas: broadening the taxonomic scope of priority setting (workshop proceedings) *(Kshs. 250)*
- Postcards for Kakamega Forest, 3 varieties *(Kshs 30 each)*
- IBA Fact Sheets
- Site Brochures for Kakamega Forest, Mukurwe-ini Valleys and South Nandi Forest
- Posters: National IBA Poster, Kinangop Grasslands and Kakamega Forest

Grey Crowned Crane by Nani Croze

Areas Conservation Strategy (NIBACS) was possible through a multi-disciplinary involvement of NLC institutions. Nature Kenya also sits in other national committees such as the sub-committee on biodiversity of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Environment (IMCE), National Wetlands Committee and the Kenya Forest Working Group (KFWG), amongst others. Nature Kenya has also contributed to various policy formulation processes, such as the National Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan (NBSAP), the draft Forest Bill 2002, the Environmental Co-ordination and Management Act (EMCA), the National Wetlands Conservation and Management Policy and the Constitutional Review Process.

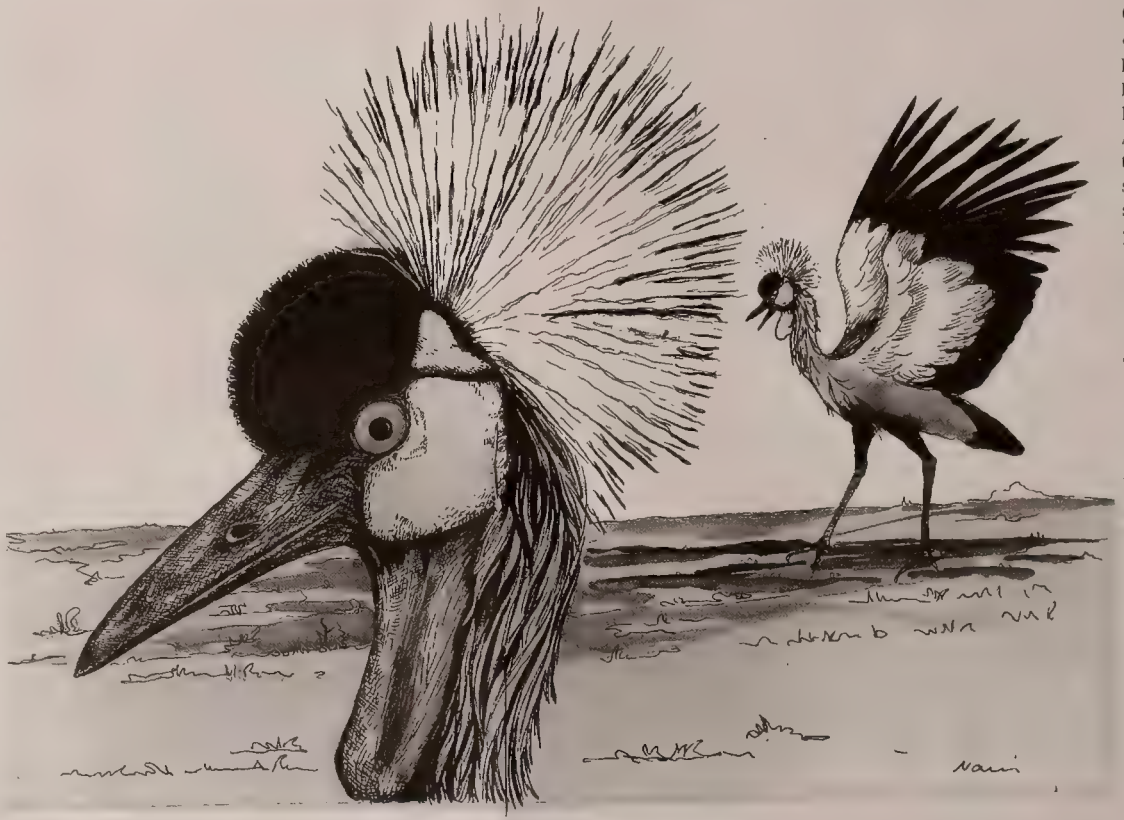
International Impact

Nature Kenya is active at regional and international level through the BirdLife International Partnership. IBA project staff have participated in the meetings and deliberations of international conventions such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), African Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA), the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the Convention on Trade and Endangered Species (CITES) and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). Over US$ 300,000 in additional funds have been leveraged for IBA activities through local and international fundrajsing initiatives. Nature Kenya's contribution to biodiversity issues has been recognised by the Kenya Government. Paul Matiku, the Executive Director, was part of the Kenya Government delegation to the 5th meeting of the parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity in Nairobi in 2000 and the 6th meeting in the Netherlands in 2002, as well as subsidiary meetings.

IBA Advocacy and Awareness Materials

The following advocacy and awareness materials were produced through the IBA Programme, and are available at the Nature Kenya office.

- Important Bird Areas in Kenya *(Kshs. 1,000)*
- From Important Bird Areas to Important Biodiversity Areas: broadening the taxonomic scope of priority setting (workshop proceedings) *(Kshs. 250)*
- Postcards for Kakamega Forest, 3 varieties *(Kshs 30 each)*
- IBA Fact Sheets
- Site Brochures for Kakamega Forest, Mukurwe-ini Valleys and South Nandi Forest
- Posters: National IBA Poster, Kinangop Grasslands and Kakamega Forest



Grey Crowned Crane by Nani Croze

Migration at Ngulia 2000 and 2001

Graeme Backhurst and David Pearson
P.O. Box 15194, Langata 00509, Nairobi E-mail: graeme@wananchi.com

In December 1969 Ngulia Safari Lodge was discovered to be an outstanding site for Palearctic bird migration: large numbers of southward-bound night-migrating birds are attracted to the lodge's game-viewing lights under misty conditions in the rainy months of November, December and sometimes January. Every year since then a team of ringers has studied the phenomenon at Ngulia. Fine-mesh mist nets are set up north of the lodge, and migrating birds flying towards the lights become trapped in the nets. Team members extract the birds, take measurements, fit a light band of aluminium like a ring on one leg, and release them. The last short account, covering the November and December 1999 studies at Ngulia, appeared in ***Kenya Birds*** 8: 24–26.

Autumn 2000

The timely arrival of the short rains brought relief at the end of the year to many drought-stricken parts of northern and eastern Kenya. In Tsavo, showers began in mid November and most nights were then misty throughout the ringing period. Two small-moon periods were covered in 26 netting days. The first, 20 November–7 December, with up to twenty people in the team, was outstanding with over 23,600 migrants being ringed, including two species new for the Ngulia ringing list: a Eurasian Hobby and a Eurasian Wryneck. The Marsh Warbler total was an all-time high at 11,201, but several other species were way down in numbers. There was only one Eurasian Nightjar, only two Tree Pipits, ten Rufous Bush Chats, no Northern Wheatears (and only one Pied and one Isabelline) and just four Upcher's Warblers. The daily ringing total, including 417 Barn Swallows, on 28 November was an all-time record 3268.

The late December session, with a very small team and no tapes played, resulted in a further 1429 migrants ringed and included a much more respectable six 'new' Upcher's Warblers plus one previously ringed at Ngulia on 14 December 1996. For comparison, on 5 December 1981 we ringed no less than 13 Upcher's.

The season's totals for the four main species were Marsh Warbler 11,942, Sprosser 6276, Common Whitethroat 2947 and River Warbler 850.

Use of Song Tapes

As in 1999, we played tapes of migrant songs at night in both the following years, but with growing reservations. In 2000 we played the tapes every night in the main session (20 November–7 December) but not at all during the short and less well manned second

session (23–30 December). We got the strong impression—already formed in 1999—that playing the tapes increased the number of Marsh Warblers being attracted down to the netting area. This increase in Marsh Warblers, in turn, had the effect of reducing the number of the so-called minor species caught by the simple process of excluding them from the nets. The late December 2000 session, when we did not play tapes at all, showed more species variety.

In 2001 we continued to play the same tapes but on alternate nights, and the results showed, quite clearly, that the species variety was greater on the nights without tapes. So should tapes have a role at all at Ngulia? We think the answer is a qualified 'Yes'.

We have established that, without tapes and without mist, hardly any birds are grounded at Ngulia. When the cloud base is a few tens of metres above the ground, very few birds will come down to net level (2–2.5 m) with lights alone. However, under these same conditions, playing tapes *can* bring down considerable numbers. Thus, our plan for future years is as follows: if the cloud or mist has not come down to ground level by about 01:00, we will play tapes, but will stop them immediately if the mist subsequently comes down. If mist is already down by 01:00 we will not play tapes at all. Also, if there is heavy rain and no mist, we will not play tapes.

There is, we feel, justification in this flexible approach. Quite often in the past, especially in November, a week or more has gone by without any mist, and hence hardly any birds; this has been a great waste of time, energy and money and an enormous disappointment for the ringers. We hope that the strategy outlined above will mean birds every night unless it is completely clear, when we have found that tapes produce little or no effect. On misty nights, however, catches will not be influenced by tapes, and we shall therefore still be able to compare catch composition, weights and so forth with results from the past.

Autumn 2001

We again ran two sessions, the first from 10 to 29 November, the second from 7 to 17 December, a total of 29 netting days altogether. The first five nights in November were dry, but with rain on 15th worries about the weather ended for the remainder of the season. With smaller teams than in most recent years, we still managed to ring 10,252 migrants in November and a very respectable 6773 in December with an even smaller team. Keeping rigidly to the one-night-on one-night-off tape-playing routine meant that on some non-tape nights, when the mist was not properly down, we did very poorly but we resisted the temptation of playing tapes. It was also interesting that the highest daily total (1,557 on 22 November) was achieved without tapes.

Species other than the four main ones were even more poorly represented than in 2000: 21 Eurasian Nightjars (admittedly 21 times better than the 2000 total), 2 Eurasian Rollers, 19 Rufous Bush Chats, 88 Iranias, 7 Common Rock Thrushes, 7 Upcher's and 37 Barred Warblers and not a single Palaearctic wheatear. The sole unusual

bird ringed was an Asian Lesser Cuckoo at night on 25 November.

The season's totals for the four main species were Marsh Warbler 7346, Sprosser 3696, Common Whitethroat 2488 and River Warbler 364. The Red-backed Shrike total of 315 was remarkable, second only to the 458 in 1995: 123 of these were ringed on 18 November. Just 62 Red-tailed Shrikes were ringed this season, with over a third (22) on 18 November.

Recoveries and controls

In 1999 we had six controls of foreign-ringed birds at Ngulia so the total of three in 2000 was low; however, there was quality! A Barn Swallow ringed in Chokpak, southern Kazakhstan; a River Warbler from Slovenia—particularly amazing as the Ljubiana scheme had only ringed 171 of this species at the time; and the third control was a Marsh Warbler from Belgium.

In 2001, we had better fortune. On the first night with mist (15 November), one of the first birds extracted was a Brussels Marsh Warbler control; it had been ringed in Belgium in July. Then, in the dawn round another Brussels Marsh which had been ringed in Luxembourg in early August. So we proceeded with high expectations, but we had to wait until 19th for the next control, another Marsh Warbler, this time from the Czech Republic, ringed in early July.

Then, on 21st we caught a Norwegian-ringed Sprosser. This is the first interchange between Norway and Kenya; the bird had been ringed in SE Norway in early August. The next day we had the fifth control, another Sprosser, this time from Finland where it had been ringed in August 2000 near Helsinki. In the December session there was just one control, a Marsh Warbler that had been ringed near Graz, Austria, in July. All the 2001 controls other than the Finnish Sprosser had been ringed the same year.

There have been so far three recoveries from the 2000 ringing: a Sprosser to Finland (control), a Marsh Warbler to NW Saudi Arabia and a Barn Swallow to Chokpak, southern Kazakhstan (control). The 2001 ringing has so far produced a Marsh Warbler recovery in Mozambique and one controlled in NW Turkey.

Afrotropicals

A wide variety (87 species, 618 individuals) of Afrotropical bird species was ringed in 2000. Most unexpected were the Wahlberg's Eagle and Narina Trogon that turned up in the bush nets. The other additions to the ringing list were Hildebrandt's Francolin, African Palm Swift and Grey-capped Social Weaver. In 2001, we ringed 492 birds of 85 species. Interesting captures included an adult Gambaga Flycatcher on 25 November (7th example of this species) and the second ever Scaly-throated Honeyguide on 16 December but there were no additions to the ringing list.

Acknowledgements

Thanks go to manager and staff at Ngulia Lodge and to the Kenya Wildlife Service for allowing us to catch and ring birds at Ngulia. For financial support we thank the Wetland Trust and the Kenya Museum Society.

Monitoring of Waterbirds in Kenya July 2000 and January 2001

Alfred Owino & Oliver Nasirwa
Ornithology Department, P O Box 40658, GPO 00100, Nairobi
E-mail: kbirds@africaonline.co.ke

In July 2000 and January 2001, a total of 167 volunteers counted waterbirds in Kenyan wetlands as part of the African Waterbird Census. In addition, various Important Bird Areas site support groups and Wednesday morning birdwalk and Potluck outing teams organized by Nature Kenya participated in the exercise.

Two sites were counted in July 2000: Lake Nakuru (and the two sewage treatment works within Nakuru town) and Lake Ol-Bolossat. There was a significant rise in overall numbers of waterbirds, and more specifically of flamingos, at Nakuru compared with January 2000. The lake's alkalinity and micro-flora had apparently stabilised, three years after the large inflow of fresh water and rapid rise in water level during the El Niño rains of 1997-98. A total of 698,880 waterbirds of 51 species were counted at the Lake. The two sewage treatment works within Nakuru town had a combined total of 4,890 waterbirds of 35 species.

Lake Ol-Bolossat held 1,955 waterbirds of 45 species. Ol-Bolossat was not counted in January 2000; however, compared with July 1999 results, the lake had far fewer waterbirds. Low water level and persistent drought experienced during most of 2000 could be the major factors for the drop witnessed in July 2000 at Ol-Bolossat.

Great Cormorant by Nani Croze

Summary results for the July 2000 and January 2001 waterbird counts

(a) Rift Valley lakes and dams

Wetland	Date	No. birds	No. species
Lake Magadi	28.01.01	15,519	38
Ol Tepesi Plain	11.02.01	4,944	14
Lake Naivasha	21.01.01	22,774	67
Lake Oloidien	20.01.01	3,790	33
Lake Sonachi	20.01.01	262	14
Lake Elmenteita	20.01.01	55,763	45
Lake Nakuru	07.01.01	669,759	54
	23.07.00	698,880	51
Nakuru Sewage Treatment Ponds	07.01.01	4,847	45
	23.07.00	4,890	35
Lake Bogoria	06.01.01	512,896	33
Kinangop dams	31.01.01	258	30
Lake Ol Bolossat	13.01.01	2,168	38
	08.07.00	1,955	45

(b) Wetlands around Nairobi

Wetland	Date	No. birds	No. species
Manguo Floodplain	03.01.01	41	10
Limuru Sewage Ponds	03.01.01	433	17
Tigoni Dam	03.01.01	16	6
Githumbwini dam	21.01.01	138	28
Dandora Oxidation Ponds	10.01.01	7,275	55
Brookside Dairy Ponds	24.01.01	133	22
Hillcrest School	17.01.01	44	14
Mamba Village Farm	17.01.01	32	12
Kenyatta University Sewage Works	24.01.01	205	30
Loresho Pond	03.01.01	18	7
Nairobi National Park	17.01.01	1,402	38

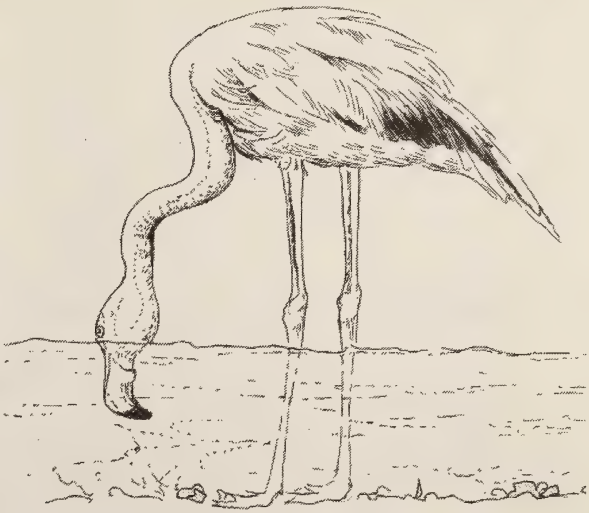
(c) Lake Victoria wetlands

Wetland	Date	No. birds	No. species
Sondu-Miriu River Mouth	27.01.01	306	21
Nyamware Rice Field	27.01.01	364	20
Kisumu Sewage Ponds	27.01.01	143	14
Dunga	27.01.01	1,272	12

In January 2001, 34 sites were covered – less than the January 2000 coverage. Lake Solai and some dams within Kinangop Plateau were not counted during this session. However, two wetlands, Roka Pools (North Coast) and Kisumu Sewage Ponds (near Lake Victoria) were counted for the first time. Sites within the Rift Valley held over 1.2 million waterbirds of 87 species – a relatively low number compared with the January 2000 results. The eleven sites counted within Nairobi and central Kenya had a total of 9,737 waterbirds of 76 species. The eight wetland sites at the north coast, most of them inland, held over 25,000 waterbirds of 78 different species. The four sites around Lake Victoria had over 2,000 waterbirds of 36 species.

Most Rift Valley sites had low water levels and mud flats characterized the shorelines of most lakes. One major factor can explain the low count at wetlands within Nairobi and around Lake Victoria compared with January 2000. The unexpected rains in January 2001 around Nairobi gave rise to several seasonal wetlands and birds may have moved to these temporary wetlands, resulting in low counts during our surveys. Flooding caused by heavy rains in January 2001 around the Lake Victoria resulted in waterbirds being scattered over large areas, which could not be covered effectively by the counting teams, especially at Sondu-Miriu River Mouth and Nyamware Rice Fields.

Flamingos in Kenya's southern Rift Valley lakes totaled over 1.1 million, slightly lower than in January 2000. Both ground and aerial flamingo counts were conducted concurrently at Bogoria and Magadi. Breeding attempts by flamingos, evidenced by abandoned nests, were noted at Bogoria, Nakuru, Elmenteita and Magadi during January 2001. The highest concentration of flamingos was at Nakuru with nearly 620,000 being recorded. This was a significant rise compared with the previous year. Lake Bogoria held over 500,000 flamingos, Elmenteita over 41,000 and Magadi over 11,000. Dandora Sewage Treatment Ponds had the highest numbers of waterbirds among the wetlands around Nairobi, Sabaki River Mouth had highest totals on north coast and Dunga Beach was highest near Lake Victoria.



(d) Kenya north coast

Wetland	Date	No. birds	No. species
Sabaki River Mouth	21.01.01	16,602	39
Lake Chem Chem	20.01.01	1,199	34
Mida Creek	21.01.01	5,193	27
Arabuko Swamp	03.02.01	344	26
Malindi Harbour	20.01.01	1,430	26
Lake Bartum	20.01.01	321	23
Lake Jilore	20.01.01	669	36
Roka Pools	21.01.01	282	17

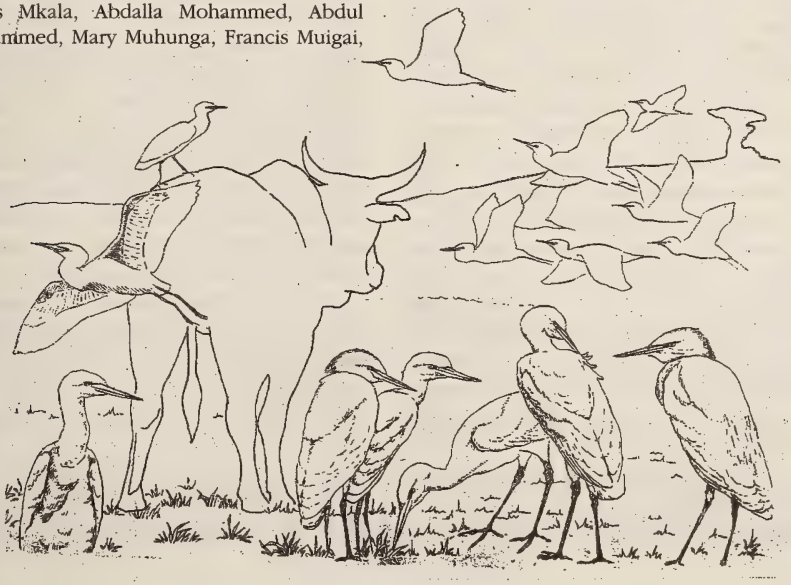
Acknowledgements

The waterbird counts are a collaborative effort between the Department of Ornithology (National Museums of Kenya), Nature Kenya (the East Africa Natural History Society) and Kenya Wildlife Service. The count organisers are grateful to the volunteers and IBA site support groups and to all who contributed in different ways to make the July 2000 and January 2001 counts a success. More particularly we are grateful to the Bird Committee of Nature Kenya, Kenya Museum Society (KMS), Important Birds Areas programme of Nature Kenya, Kenya Wildlife Service - Netherlands Wetlands Programme and Elsa Trust for providing funds for the exercise. Lake Nakuru National Park and Wildlife Clubs of Kenya (Nakuru) provided accommodation to the volunteers at their hostels in Nakuru. Elsamere Field Study Centre provided accommodation to volunteers at Naivasha. We thank the boat owners at Lake Naivasha, who kindly loaned their boats and in most cases donated fuel: Colin Burch, John D'Olier, Elsamere Conservation Centre, Fisherman's Camp, Lake Naivasha Yacht Club, Loldia Farm. We thank the landowners around Lake Oloidien who permitted us to count the site. Delamere Camp permitted us to count at Lake Elmenteita. Turtle Bay Beach Club and Mrs. Simpson's Guest House provided transport and snacks to the Kenya coast participants. Wildlife Clubs of Kenya (Western Kenya) and Kenya Wildlife Service provided transport to the participants at Lake Victoria wetlands and Nairobi National Park. We appreciate these major contributions. Fleur Ng'weno led the Wednesday morning birdwalk participants in counts at sites around Nairobi. Colin Jackson assisted in organising counts at the north coast. William Kimosop, Tim Samwels, Margaret Otieno, Evans Mkalla, Simon Gitau, Narinder Heyer, Bill and Sue Deverell, Sarah Higgins (LNRA), Simon Gitau, Ann Kahihia and Jackson Asila assisted in many ways and deserve special thanks.

Participants in the July 2000 and January 2001 waterbird counts

Celline Achieng, Jared Akuku, Bernard Amakobe, Samwel Ambasa, Corinne Archer, Jackson Asila, Fred Barasa, Jonathan Baya, Anniek Van Baren, Alfred Boit, Dorrie Brass, Bernd de Bruijn, Alison

Cameron, Dylan Cashion, Betty Charo, Bernard Chege, Reuben Chege, Samwel Chege, Musa Cheruiyot, Arthur Shamala Chiluka, Evans Chwala, Jeff Davis, Chris Davis, Bernard Depereijn, Kenneth Esau, George Eshiamwata, Benson Esikuta, Dan Firor, Yassin Gambere, Ann Gathitu, Paul Gathitu, John Gathua, Elly Kagwi Gathungu, ,Patrick Gichuki, David Gikonyo, David Gitau, Francis Gitau, Simon Gitau, Meshack Godson, Yoko Hagiwara, Elema Hapicha, Narinder Heyer, Titus Imboma, Colin Jackson, Sidi Jilani, Simon Ikiiru Joakim, Stanley Kibicho, George Kagwi, Martin Kahindi, Michael Kahiti, Elias Kamande, Shumpei Kambe, Samwel Kangogo, Philip Kanja, Anthony Kanyi, Boniface Kariuki, James M. Kariuki, John Kariuki, Joseph Kariuki, Peter Kariuki, Julius Katambo, Shomi Katana, Gabriel Katana, Thomas Kazungu, Marcella Kibon, Samwel Kibui, Simon Kiilu, Christopher Kikwai, Dominic Kimani, Samwel Kimani, Timothy Kimani, Michale Kimeli, Scholastica Kimeli, Muoki Kioko, Onesmus Kioko, Miriam Kiprop, J.K. Kiptum, Walter Knaunsenberger, Wellington Kombe, Thomas Korgoren, Elizabeth Kuria, Justus Kyalo, Steve Lopong, Dominic Loponu, Edwin Macharia, Geoffrey Macharia, Meshack, Macharia, Harry Maide, Patrick Maritim, Johanna Maukonen, Mary Mayende, Kathy McAleer, Philip McOsano, Zachary Methu, Leonard Migowa, Stephen Milgo, Evans Mkala, Abdalla Mohammed, Abdul Mohammed, Mary Muhunga, Francis Muigai, Mercy Njeri Muiruri, Samwel Muli, Paul Mungai, Samwel Mungai, John Mungoko, John Musina, Charles Musyoki, Nicholas Muya, Jonathan Mwachongo, Albert Mwamure, Andrew Mwangi, C.M. Mwangi, David Muigai Mwangi, Esther Mwangi, Gicuhi Wa Mwangi, Milka Mwangi, Moses Mwangi, Peter Kamau Mwangi, Kamau Solomon Mwaniki, Anastacia Mwaura, George Mwaura, Joseph Mwaura, Njogu Mwaura, Harrison Mwenda, Florence Mwikali, Nahashon Nachopa, Nicodemus Nalianya, Oliver Nasirwa, Robert Ndetei, Daniel Ndoria, Kimani Ndungu, Kuria Ndungu, Lawrence Nganga, Mary Nganga, Peter Ngatia, Shadrack Ngene, John Ngeti, Bettina Ng'weno, Fleur Ng'weno, Edward Njagi, Terry Njeri, James N. Njeru, Joseph Njoroge, Lynn Noel, Mike Noel, Maurice Onyimo Nyaligu, Elizabeth Nyambura, Dan Peter Omollo, Fred Onyango, Joseph Orinda, Nickson Otieno, Alfred Owino, Vincent Owuor, Shailesh Patel, Joseph Ruhiu, Jane Sakwa, Aki Sato, Silky Schmidt, Vincent Sibilo, Bryce Smediey, Sukhi Soin, James Speed, Ronald Sumaili, Emmanuel Thoya, J.W. Thuku, Nicholas Wanjohi Thuo, Wanjohi Thuo, Peter Tsuma, Anderson Tuitoek, Paul Vischer, James Wachira, James Wainaina, Esther Wairimu, Stephen Wamiti, Muiruri Wamwea, Esther Wangui, Susan Wanjira, Joseph Wafula Wasike, James Waweru, Patrick Kamau Waweru, Yosef Wegge, Catherine Wekesa, Thomas Wende.



RECORDS

Compiled by the
Records Sub-committee
of the EANHS Bird Committee

This section exists for the publication of interesting observations and for updates to *A Bird Atlas of Kenya* (Lewis & Pomeroy, 1989). All contributions are welcomed.

If you are sending in records for *Kenya Birds*, please consider these guidelines:

For (non-breeding) records of Afrotropical, oceanic, and Palaearctic birds, please send in any observation **with notes** that you think are of interest, e.g. early or late dates for Palaearctic and intra-African migrants, unusual records for your area, or any unusually large or impressive movements of birds. We are keen to publish information of this kind. Records with information, rather than simply a list of birds, are particularly interesting and valuable, e.g. "male singing from bush", or "the bird was seen in flock of Barn Swallows...", or "1 adult and 3 immatures..." etc...

The editors will select records for publication according to space available. With that in mind, please remember that **all** records are useful for supplementing the computerized database of the bird Atlas held in the Ornithology Department, National Museums of Kenya, through which our knowledge of bird distribution and seasonality in Kenya will be improved.

For breeding records, those of *confirmed* breeding are useful for ALL species, even the most common ones; records of *probable* breeding (nest building, courtship etc.) are only needed for rare species or ones where there are few breeding records. For definitions and codes of "*confirmed*" and "*probable*" breeding, see *Kenya Birds* Vol. 5(2) p. 82. Interesting records will be published here and the others stored by the EANHS for analysis of breeding seasons, success rates, habitat requirements, etc.

You are strongly urged to fill in a nest record card at the same time. Much more detail can be recorded on a card, and if your record can be added to the card collection then it has permanent value.

For all records, including breeding records, please be **as detailed as possible** about dates and locations. If you have sightings from places not easily found on the map, please take the trouble of giving us the latitude and longitude of the site to as much precision as you can (preferably the nearest second of arc or better). We can then use this information as we update the *Atlas*.

Supporting details and descriptions of problematic species (easily confused, out of range etc.) are always welcome, and make publication more likely (see *Kenya Birds* Vol. 4(2), p. 84 for suggestions on how to submit a record). Records of certain species are particularly requested for inclusion in this report. These species are indicated by the codes "A", "B" and "X" in the *Check-list of the Birds of Kenya* 3rd edition, 1996 (available for 100/= from the Nature Kenya office). For particularly unusual sightings (rarity), supporting details (i.e. field notes, photos, tape-recording...) will be needed for scrutiny by the EANHS Rarity Committee before the record can be accepted.

All records should be sent to the Records Officer at the Ornithology Department, National Museums of Kenya. There you will also be able to obtain Nest Record cards and National Birdmap checklists free of charge.

P.O Box 40658, GPO 00100 Nairobi
e-mail:kbirds@africaonline.co.ke,
Phone (02) 3742161/31 ext. 243.

Key to records

For new Atlas records, the species number as given in the Atlas is placed in brackets after the name: e.g. Whinchat (A# 653). The new records themselves are indicated in square brackets. Codes are: **pres**, present (first record); **post pres**, present (first post -1970 record); **prob**, probable breeding; **conf**, confirmed breeding; **post conf**, confirmed breeding (first since 1970). So, for example, [conf 25B] indicates that the species is confirmed as breeding (and is therefore present) in square 25B. The English names follow the *Check-list of the Birds of Kenya,* 3rd edition, EANHS, Nairobi, 1996.

Overview

Since the previous publication of records dates back to *Kenya Birds* of July 2000, Vol 8(1), we had quite a large backlog of records still to be published. Below appear records that have been submitted between the previous issue and World Birdwatch 2001. To keep this overview within limits, we concentrated on publishing the records that are updates to *A Bird Atlas of Kenya* (Lewis & Pomeroy, 1989). In following issues of *Kenya Birds* we hope to leave more space for interesting records that are not new for the *Atlas.*

From the published records, it is obvious that bird watching efforts, not necessarily in remote areas, continue to contribute very valuable information to our *Atlas* data. The message is that there is still so much to learn about the distribution and status of Kenya's birds, and that it is always worth submitting any checklists and information from anywhere in the country!

Certain areas brought in many new Atlas records: Meru NP continues to be one of these places, forming a most interesting mix of central highland and coastal species. New records include **Eastern Nicator, Terrestrial Brownbul, Black-headed Batis, Black-throated Wattle-eye** and **Kenrick's Starling**. A Ringing Group expedition to Mwea was also rewarding *Atlas*-wise, with **Great Spotted** and **Levaillant's Cuckoo** and **Lead-coloured Flycatcher,** amongst others. Western grass and bush lands (Busia grasslands IBA and surroundings), rarely visited by birders and under severe threat of disappearing under sugar cane, still leave birds to be discovered, as is illustrated by new records of **Streaky-breasted Flufftail, (probably breeding) White-crested Turaco, Blue-breasted Kingfisher** and **Locust-Finch**. Many interesting records from Masai Mara NR, most mentionable being an **African Pitta** which stayed in the Talek Hyena Research camp for a few days. **House Sparrows** have reached Keekorok Lodge (and they seem to be present in many more localities than before), and 3 **(Eurasian) Griffon Vultures** (*Gyps fulvus*) were seen in Oloolulo escarpment flying north. Regular sightings of Eurasian Griffons have also been recorded from Nairobi NP; the vulture bathing pools are a good spot to sort out this vulture from Rüppell's and African White-backed vultures. The geographical and biological history of these birds remains

a mystery (are these genuine birds whose origin we don't know, or could they be a hybrid with Ruppell's?).

Some nationally scarce birds stand out, first of all the first documented records in 80 years of **Black-backed Cisticola** in Ruma NP! Could this tiny bird still be hiding in other places...? A **Spotted Creeper** from Marich Pass is a very good record of this rare species. Two records of **Brown-chested Plover** are of interest, twice in Masai Mara and another of two birds on the shores of Lake Victoria near Yala swamp. More of a local rarity to Nairobi was a **Bare-faced Go-away Bird** that was seen at Hillcrest School in Karen. Some of the interesting migrants that were noted include a **Greater Spotted Eagle** in Nairobi NP, two records of **Imperial Eagle** and a **Basra Reed Warbler** at Mara Safari Club.

Good breeding records have come in from Kakamega Forest; where it is not easy to observe breeding in many of these forest birds and records of some, like **Blue-headed Bee-eater**, are scarce. Breeding records of **Hinde's Babbler** were reported from Wajee Nature Camp and around Meru town.

Acknowledgments

The Records Sub-committee members are Bernd de Bruijn, Itai Shanni, Shailesh K. Patel, Colin Jackson, John Musina, Anthony Kuria, Nicodemus Nalianya. We would like to express our special thanks to two interns in the Ornithology Department, Philista Malaki and Nickson Otieno, who helped us a lot and contributed many hours in sorting out the data for us.

AFROTROPICAL RECORDS

Long-tailed Cormorant (A# 22): [pres 88B] Kibwezi forest, Umani Springs, 9-11/02/01, BdB

Rufous-bellied Heron: Masai Mara GR near Governor's Camp, 20/8/00, PRH - Mara is probably the best place in Kenya to find this beautiful heron.

African Open-billed Stork (A# 51): [pres 89D] Kingfisher Camp, Tsavo East, 31/12/00, P&RH

African Green Ibis (A# 55): [pres 62D] Kieni Forest, 21/05/00, NKPL

Spur-winged Goose (A# 65): [pres 103A] Sabaki river mouth, 29/12/00, PK, ET

African Black Duck (A# 68): [pres 75C] Nguruman Hills, 12/99, LN

Cape Teal (A# 69): [pres 88C] Amboseli NP, 28/04/01, BdB.

Bateleur (A# 99): [pres 114B] Diani, 20/9/01, IS

Banded Snake-Eagle (A# 102): [pres 52C] Meru NP, 5-6/5/00, BF

Little Sparrowhawk (A# 109): [pres 74A] Mara Safari Club, 8/04/00, DA, MC

African Cuckoo-Hawk: Malu Farm Ltd, River Malewa, 9/10/00, BK

Harlequin Quail (A# 174): [pres 88C] Amboseli NP, 28/04/01, BdB.

Crested Guineafowl (A# 179): [pres 48D] Kakamega Forest, Bunyagu, 24/8/01, GE, SP, BdB

White-spotted Flufftail (A# 185): [pres 48C] Mungatsi grasslands, 28/02/01, GE, SP, BdB

Streaky-breasted Flufftail (A# 188): [pres 48A] Alupe, 2/6/01, BF

African Crake (A# 191): [pres 48A] Alupe, 2/6/01, BF

Baillon's Crake (A# 195): [pres 88C] Ol Tukai, Amboseli, 13/07/00, TP, Single bird feeding energetically in sparse vegetation at the water's edge. (Note: Baillon's Crake is also a Palearctic migrant)

Lesser Jacana (A# 212): [pres 61B] Ndoinet dam, Molo, 31/12/99, EH

Spur-winged Plover (A# 218): [pres 89D] Kingfisher Camp, Tsavo East, 31/12/00, P&RH

Brown-chested Plover (A# 221): [pres 73B] single adult, Olonana Camp, western Mara, 4/8/00, IT; [pres 60A] two birds on Yala swamp edge, 4 km south of Kadenge, 26/8/01, GE, SP, BdB

White-fronted Plover (A# 229): [pres 89D] Kingfisher Camp, Tsavo East, 31/12/00, P&RH

African Skimmer (A# 317): [pres 60B] Dunga Beach, Kisumu, 15/10/00, FN, BC, HG

Red-fronted Parrot (A# 342): [pres 62B] Aberdare Country Club, 15-16/09/01, P&KP, P&RH

Feral Lovebird (A# 349): [pres 75D] Athi plains, 15/02/01, BdB, SP

Bare-faced Go-away-bird (A# 353): [pres 75B] Hillcrest School, Nairobi, 23/12/00, JD

Hartlaub's Turaco (A# 358): [pres 75C] Nguruman Hills, 12/99, LN

Great Spotted Cuckoo (A# 362): [pres 63D] Mwea NR, 5-7/5/01, CJ, LAB, NN, ABJ

Levaillant's Cuckoo (A# 364): [pres 63D] Mwea NR, 7/5/01, CJ, LAB, NN, ABJ, [pres 88B] Kibwezi forest, Umani Springs, 9-11/02/01, BdB.

White-faced Scops Owl (A# 384): [pres 60C] Ruma NP, Homa Bay, 28/05/00, BCh.

Montane Nightjar (A# 398): [pres 74A] Mara Safari Club, 8/04/00, DA, MC

Eurasian Nightjar (A# 401): [pres 52C] Meru NP, 5-6/5/00, BF

Mottled Swift (A# 416) [pres 75B] Gatamaiyu forest, Kimende, 26-27/02/01, SP, BC, BdB.

Alpine Swift (A# 417): [pres 63D] Mwea NR, 5-7/5/01, CJ, LAB, NN, ABJ

Nyanza Swift (A# 421): [pres 48C] Matayos grassland near Busia, 17/10/00, FN, BC, HG

Blue-breasted Kingfisher (A# -): [pres 48A] Bird flying and calling from riverine trees (sound-recorded) in Mungatsi grassland, Musukoto river, 28/8/01, GE, SP, BdB – a very rarely recorded western species, very little habitat remaining in Kenya.

Trumpeter Hornbill (A# 466): [pres 63B] Eastern slopes of Mt. Kenya, Chuka town, 28/08/01, VM.

Red-throated Wryneck (A# 510): [pres 62D] Njurui, Murungaru, 15/7/00, AMw, GN, JWT

African Pitta (A# 525): [pres 74A] Hyena Research Camp, Talek gate, Masai Mara, 17/6/01, Dave Simpson – this bird was present for a few days while being fed *ugali* by the camp's cook.

Somali Short-toed Lark (A# 541): [pres 74A] Mara Safari Club, 4/4/00, DA, MC

Chestnut-headed Sparrow-Lark (A# 546): [pres 100D] Serengeti Plains near Lake Jipe, 25/5/01, BF

Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Lark (A# 547): [pres 100D] Serengeti Plains near Lake Jipe, 25/5/01, BF

Montane Oriole (A# 570): [pres 62D] Kieni Forest, 21/05/00, NKPL

Yellow-whiskered Greenbul (A# 618): [pres 75C] Nguruman Hills, 12/99, LN

Terrestrial Brownbul (A# 627): [pres 52C] Nyati camp site, Meru NP, 5-6/5/00, BF

Eastern Nicator (A# 633): [pres 52C] Nyati camp site, Meru NP, 5-6/5/00, BF

Eastern Bearded Scrub Robin (A# 659): [pres 88B] Kibwezi forest, Umani Springs, 9-11/02/01, BdB.

Lead-coloured Flycatcher (A# 787): [pres 63D] Mwea NR, 5-7/5/01, CJ, LAB, NN, ABJ

Little Rush Warbler (A# 682): [pres 61B] Kerasoi Dam, Molo Grasslands, 11/9/00, EH - well-flooded grasslands provided a good habitat for this species.

Evergreen Forest Warbler (A# 685): [pres 62D] Gatamaiyu Forest, 11/10/01, HG, SP, BdB

Lesser Swamp Warbler (A# 696): [pres 74A] Njapit swamp, Kipelelo, 11/04/00, DA, MC; [pres 88C] Amboseli NP, 28/04/01, BdB

Black-backed Cisticola (A# 718): [pres 60C] Ruma NP, 29/07/00, JJ - the first documented record of this extremely rare cisticola in over 80 years!

Zitting Cisticola (A# 719): [pres 52C] around Nyati camp site, Meru NP, 5-6/5/00, BF

Ashy Cisticola (A# 725): [pres 88C] Amboseli NP, 28/04/01, BdB.

Black-headed Batis (A# 798): [pres 52C] Nyati river, Meru NP, 5-6/5/00, BF

Black-throated Wattle-eye (A# 803): [pres 63C] Kianyaga Valley, Embu, 4/10/00, FN, BC, HG

Purple-throated Cuckoo-shrike (A# 606): [pres 75c] Nguruman Hills, 12/99, LN

Red-shouldered Cuckoo-shrike (A# 603): [pres 48B] Bungoma, 3/6/01, BF

Ashy Flycatcher (A# 785): [pres 88B] Kibwezi forest, Umani Springs, 9-11/02/01, BdB.

Blue-mantled Crested Flycatcher (A# 811): [pres 52C] Nyati camp site, Meru NP, 5-6/5/00, BF

Grassland Pipit (A# 814): [pres 103A] Sabaki river mouth, Malindi, 29/12/00, PK, ET

Bush Pipit (A# 821) [pres 75C] Endashant Swamp, Ngong, 05/01, SP, BdB; [pres 100D] Serengeti Plains near Lake Jipe, 25/5/01, BF

Rosy-breasted Longclaw (A# 827): [pres 88C] Amboseli NP, 05/01, DR

Grey-headed Bush-Shrike (A# 854): [pres 89D] Kingfisher Camp, Tsavo East, 31/12/00, P&RH

Kenrick's Starling (A# 876): [pres 52C] pair inspecting potential nest hole outside Nyati forest, Meru NP, 5-6/5/00, BF

Purple Starling (A# 883): [pres 48A] Alupe, 3/6/01, BF

Waller's Starling (A# 887): [pres 62D] Kieni Forest, 21/05/00, NKPL

Viellot's Black Weaver (A# 941): [pres 37C] Kongelai Escarpment, 21/10/00 FN, BC, HG

Golden Palm Weaver (A# 945): [pres 89D] Kingfisher Camp, Tsavo East, 31/12/00, P&RH

African Golden Weaver (A# 946): [pres 89D] Kingfisher Camp, Tsavo East, 31/12/00, P&RH

Little Weaver (A# 957): [pres 48A] Malaba, 3/6/01, BF

Yellow-crowned Bishop (A# 976): [pres 88C] Amboseli NP, 17-20/2/01, DB, IA

House Sparrow (A# 992): [pres 88C] Amboseli NP, 28/04/01, BdB; [pres 74A] Mara Safari Club, 08/00, DA, MC, presumably arrived with the supply truck!?

Abyssinian Crimsonwing (A# 1016): [press 75B] Nairobi Aboretum, 20/05/00, WMB

Locust-Finch (A# -): [pres 48A] Alupe, 3/6/01, BF

Papyrus Canary (A# 1055): [pres 60C] Ruma NP, Homa Bay, 28/05/00, BCh.

Thick-billed Seed-eater (A# 1063): [pres 76A] Blue Posts Hotel, Thika, 18/11/01, SP

World Bird Watch 1999:

Yellow-billed Egret (A# 38): [pres 88B] Umani Springs Camp, Kibwezi, 3/10/99, HE, RM, P&RH, P&KP

Black-headed Heron (A# 43): [pres 37A] Luwus Pond, Marich Pass, 2/10/99, PK, HH, EO, JK, AB, JMw, SP

African Spoonbill (A# 57): [pres 88B] Kilalinda to Mtito Andei, 2/10/99, AM, Ki, MM

Cape Teal (A# 69): [pres 49C] Mugedu Mugo, 3/10/99, BB, BL, KM, BS

Blue Quail (A# 175): [pres 114A] Sable Valley Wildlife Sanctuary, Coast, 3/10/99, FA

Spur-winged Plover (A# 218): [pres 60A] Sindo and Chamarungo Islands, Mbita Point ICIPE Field Station, South Nyanza; 2 & 3/10/99, JO, AH & CH

Crowned Plover (A# 220): [pres 48C] Lake Kanyaboli, Kadenge, 2/10/99, NN, SG, JM

Whiskered Tern (A# 312): [pres 60A] Chamarungo Islands, Mbita Point Homa Bay, 3/10/99, JO, AH, CH

Black-faced Sandgrouse (A# 319): [pres 49C] Mugedu Mugo, 3/10/99, BB, BL, KM, BS

Emerald-spotted Wood Dove (A# 337): [pres 48C] Lake Kanyaboli, Kadenge, 2/10/99, NN, SG, JM

Black Cuckoo (A# 366): [pres 37B] Marich Pass, Kapenguria, 3/10/99, PK, HH, EO, JK, AB, JMw, SP

Slender-tailed Nightjar (A# 406): [pres 49C] Moi University, Chepkoilel Campus, Eldoret, 3/10/99, YA, DM, JK, CW, DN, WW

Madagascar Bee-eater (A# 446): [pres 88B] Kilalinda to Mtito Andei, 2/10/99, AM, Ki, MM

Blue Swallow (A# 551): [pres 60C] Ruma (Lambwe Valley), South Nyanza, 2/10/99; Sindo, Mbita Point ICIPE Field Station, South Nyanza, 2/10/99, JO, AH, CH

Wire-tailed Swallow (A# 552): [pres 88B] Kilalinda to Mtito Andei, 2/10/99, AM, Ki, MM

Yellow-bellied Greenbul (A# 621): [pres 52C] Meru NP, 2/10/99, JJ, MMa.

Tawny-flanked Prinia (A# 743): [pres 61D] Eastern Mau Forest, 2/10/99, PM, PO, MW, JKa, FM

Pale Wren-Warbler (A# -): [pres 74A] Masai Mara River Camp, 3/10/99, WO, JoM, EI

Spotted Creeper (A# 588): [pres 37A] Marich Pass Field Study Centre, Marich Pass, 2/10/99, PK, HH, EO, JK, AB, JMw, SP – it is hopeful to get a record from a new location of this rare and decreasing species.

Black–throated Wattle-eye (A# 803): [pres 52C] Meru NP, 2/10/99, JJ, MMa

Black-bellied Starling (A# 877): [pres 101D] Taita/Rukinga Conservancy, 2/10/99, ES, RD, PG, GM, AS

Golden-breasted Starling (A# 893): [pres 88B] Kilalinda to Mtito Andei, 2/10/99, AM, Ki, MM

Beautiful Sunbird (A# 920): [pres 52C] Meru NP, 2/10/99, JJ, MMa

Yellow-spotted Petronia (A# 995): [pres 61B] Teret, Njoro, 2/10/99, AnM, MT, EW, MuW, JL

Chestnut Weaver (A# 994): [pres 49C] Mugedu Mugo, 3/10/99, BB, BL, KM, BS

Cinnamon-breasted Rock Bunting (A# 1047): [pres 52C] Meru NP, 2/10/99, JJ, MMa

Brimstone Canary (A# 1059): [pres 75C] Olekemonge Gorge, 2/10/99, CC

Streaky Seedeater (A# 1064): [pres 75C] Olekemonge Gorge, 2/10/99, CC

PALEARCTIC MIGRANTS:

Eurasian Griffon Vulture (A#): [pres 75B] Nairobi NP, 11/11/00, BF, Second sighting in Kenya; currently up to three birds are seen regularly in NNP; [pres 74A], Oloolo escarpment, 23/05/01, BdB, KdJ, group of 3 birds flying north.

Common Squacco Heron (A# 31): [pres 89D] Kingfisher Camp, Tsavo East, 31/12/00, P&RH

Eurasian Marsh Harrier (A# 97): [pres 61A] Muhuroni junction, 27/05/01, BF

Lesser-Spotted Eagle (A# 127): [pres 51A] Buffalo Springs NR, 31/10/00, BF

Greater Spotted Eagle (A# 128): [pres 74A] Nairobi NP, 10/11/00, BF, Immature bird at a Zebra carcass with Tawny Eagle and vultures.

Imperial Eagle: Masai Mara NR, 8/11/00, BF; Nairobi NP, 18/11/00, BF

Eurasian Honey Buzzard (A# 137): [pres 74A] Mara Safari Club, 19/09/00-10/04/01, DA, MC

Common Kestrel (A# 159): [pres 51A] Buffalo Springs NR, 31/10/00, BF

Eleonora's Falcon: Nakuru NP, 5/11/00, BF

Sooty Falcon: Samburu NR, 2/11/00, BF

Corncrake (A# 192): [pres 74A] Masai Mara NR, 9/11/00, BF

Little Ringed Plover: Samburu GR, 1/11/00, BF

Ruff (A# 247): [pres 75D] Athi plains, 15/02/01, BdB, SP

Common Redstart (A# 647): [pres 74A] Ol-Choro, Kipelelo, 7/4/00, DA, MC

Sedge Warbler (A# 690): [pres 88C] Amboseli NP, 29/04/01, BdB; [pres 74A] Mara river, Mara Safari Club, 12/4/00, DA, MC

Eurasian Reed Warbler (692): [pres74A] Njapit swamp, Kipelelo, 12/04/99, DA, MC
Basra Reed Warbler (A# 695): [pres 74A] Mara Safari Club, 5-10/4/00, DA, MC
Common Whitethroat (A# 706): [pres 74A] Mara Safari Club, 13/04/00, DA, MC
Barred Warbler: Samburu GR, 2/11/00, BF
Red-throated Pipit (A# 816): [pres 75D] Athi plains, 15/02/01, Bdb, SP

Contributors for Vol 9

AB, Anna Baker; ABJ, Annali Bamber-Jones; AH, Ann Hill; AK, Asha Kolei; AM, Alice Mackay; AMw, Andrew Mwangi; AnM, Anastacia Mwaura; AS, Amin Samson; AW, A.B. Wandera; BA, Bernard Amakobe; BB, Boaz Baruoi; BC, Bernard Chege; BCh, Benson Cheruyiot; BdB, Bernd de Bruijn; BF, Brian Finch; BK, Boniface Kariuki; B&CM, Bob & Carolyn Munce; BL, Benjamin Lagat; BM, Ben Mungambi; BMb, Bernard Mburu; BS, Bernard Soi; CC, C.R. Caldara; CCC, Chris Campbell-Close; CG, Cecilia Gichuki; CH, Chris Hill; ChW, Charles Waihenya; CJ, Colin Jackson; CW, Caroline Wamboi; DA, Dennie Angwin; DB, D. Brass; DG, Douglas Gathungu; DK, Dominic Kamau Kimani; DL, Dominic Loponu; DM, David Manowa; DMe, David T. Meijo; DMu, D. Mutinda; DN, Duke Nyamichaba; DR, Dave Richards; EH, Eric Harris; EI, Enoch Isanya; EK, Esther Kahuho; EL, Ezekiel Lekanyon; EO, Erick Omondi; ET, Emmanuel Thoya; ES, Edwin Selempo; EW, Eric Wakahia; EWI, Esther W. Irungu; FM, Philista Malaki; FMb, Florence Mbogo; FN, Fleur Ng'weno; GE, George Eshiamwata; GI, Grephus Ingati; GN, G. Njoroge; HE, H Elkins; HG, Hector Gomez de Silva Garza; HH, Harold Henry; HM, Henry Mbugua; IA, I. Ayres; IG, Isaac Gathitu; IN, Ian Ndung'u; IS, Itai Shanni; IT, Isaac Tesot; JC, Jeffrey Coburn; JD, John Dawson; JG, J.W. Gathitu; JJ, Jeffrey James; JK, James Kiptoo; JKa, Joshua Karani; JL, Joy Lusige; JM, John Musina; JMK, Jasper Mbae Kirika; JMu, John Mukera; JMw, Japheth Mwok; JO, Jennifer Oduori; JoK, John Kiptun; JoM, Johnstone Mule; JS, James Strong; JWT, James Waweru Tetu; JWW, James Waweru Wachira; Ki, Muoki Kioko; KdJ, Klaas de Jong; KK, Kimtai Korir; KM, Kyale Muteti; LAB, Leon Bennun; LN, Leo Niskanen; M&LN, Mike & Lynn Noel; MC, Mike Clifton, MaC, Maxwell Chovu; MKC, Musa K. Cheruyiot; MM, Mik Mafiwson; MMa, Mark Mallalieu; MNM, Mercy Njeri Muiruri; MT, Muthoni Tabitha; MuW, Muthui Wambua; MW, Mohamoud Wasike; NKPL, Nature Kenya Pot Luck outing, NN, Nicodemus 'Nico' Nalianya; NSS, Nixon S Setei; PG, Paul Gray; P&KP, Mr & Mrs P&K Plumbe; P&RH, Mr. & Mrs. P&R Hechle; P&HP, Phyllis & Henry Paltridge; PD, Peter Davey; PeK, Peter Kamau; PK, Paul Kennedy; PKa, Philip Kamau; PKi, Peter Kiptalam; PM, Philip McOsano; PMu, Paul Muthui; PO, Paul Okello; PP, Phyllis Paltridge; PRH, Philip Hechle; RM, R. Minns; RMe, Richard Mearns; RD, Rob Dodson; SG, Simon Gitau; SK, Samuel Ndegwa Kabaiku; SKa, Silvester Karimi; SLB, South Lake Birdwatchers; SN, S.M. Njoki; SP, Shailesh Patel; SS, Steven Shanooh; SW, Stephen Wamiti; TM, Tabitha Mugo; TP, Tony Potterton; VM, Valerian Micmeni; WO, Willis Okech; WMB, Wednesday Morning Birdwalk; WV, Wayne Vos; WW, Wolde Wesa; YA, Yusuf Adan.

BREEDING RECORDS:

The Nest Record Scheme is currently lagging behind; we are facing a tremendous number of cards waiting to be checked, and therefore the breeding records published here are just the first step in the clearing of the backlog. The number of records published are also subject to space limitations. We urge all of you to keep on sending breeding records, and on our side, we will do our best to bring the interesting ones into print.

The Nest Record card in current use seems to be proving itself, and we trust that the explanations given in *Kenya Birds* Vol. 7 will have helped those who weren't quite sure how to complete a card. We are keen to improve the system as much as possible to make it more efficient and enjoyable, and therefore any feedback is welcome.

All those who submitted over ten cards are listed below with the number of cards they completed and returned. It has become normal to see Jeffory Coburn as the leading person in submitting these cards, and again we would like commend him for his incredible number of cards – 345! Jasper Mbae Kirika and James Waweru Wachira are also worth mentioning for their amazing amount of cards submitted (143 and 107 respectively).

Many submitted records of more unusual birds for which we have very little information on breeding habits. These are particularly interesting to see – though records of common birds are not less valuable.

Number of cards submitted:
Jeffory Coburn (345):
Jasper Mbae Kirika (143):
James Waweru Wachira (107):
Simon Kiiru Joakim (98):
James Wainaina Gathitu (58):
Dennie Angwin & Mike Clifton (46):
Stephen Wamiti Wanyoike (33):
Andrew Mwangi (29):
David Mutinda (26):
Dominic Kimani Kaboro (26):
Bernard Chege (24):
Wayne Vos (20):
Bonface Kariuki (17):
Francis O. Omondi (15):
Peter Kamau (14):
Charles Waihenya (13):
Antony B Wandera (12):
Samuel Ndegwa Kabaiku (12):
Mercy Njeri Muiruri (11):
Daniel Njiiri (11):

Ten and less: Bernard Amakobe, Fred Barasa, Bernard Mburu Chege, Benson Cheruyiot, Musa K. Cheruyiot, Peter Davey, John Dawson, Bernd de Bruijn, Olsean Dooan, George Eshiamwata, Andrew Fisher, David Fisher, Douglas Gachuha, Isaac Gathitu: Cecilia Gichuki, Patrick Gichuki, Ann Goss, Harold Henry, Titus Imboma, Grephus Ingati, Esther W Irungu, Dr Geoffrey & Dorothy Irvine, Colin Jackson, Silvester Karimi, David Kariuki, Patrick Mwangi Kariuki, Muoki Kioko, Peter Kiptalam, Kimtai Korir, Peter Liech, Michael Maina, Evanson Makala, Kevin Mazera, Richard Mearns, David Meijo, Paul Moijo, Paul Muamba, Stephen Muchoki, Ben Mugambi, David Muigai, Francis Muigai, Paul Muthui, Mary Mwihaki, Fleur Ng'weno, Mike & Lynn Noel, Shailesh Patel, Esther Wainaina, Mr. Walker, Wednesday Morning Birdwalk.

Little Grebe (A# 2): [conf 49A] near Moi University, Eldoret, 1/11/99, JC

Hamerkop (A# 44): [conf 74A] Mara Serena Lodge, 28/02/01, WV

Woolly-necked Stork (A# 48): [conf 50A] Lake Baringo, 05/01, BM - two dependent young out of nest accompanying adult; nest on the well-known cliffs.

Marabou Stork (A# 50): [conf 48D] Kakamega General Hospital, 28/1/01, JMK; [conf 50C] Lake Bogoria Hotel, Marigat, 3/10/99, MKC

Yellow-billed Stork (A# 52): [prob 114B] Tiwi river mouth, 04/01, KM – pair building nest on a Baobab tree.

Yellow-billed Duck (A# 74): [conf 62A] Lake Ol Bolossat, Nyahururu, 19/1/98, CG, ChW - eggs taken by unknown predators.

White-backed Vulture (A# 90): [conf 76A] Athi River School for Field Studies, 14/10/00, MNM – record just east of square 75B which contain the well-known Hippo Pools colony.

Hooded Vulture (A# 92): [conf 74A] Mara Safari Club, 15-21/09/00, DA & MC – bird sitting on nest

African Harrier Hawk (A# 94): [conf 62A] Industrial Area, Nakuru Town, 23/10/00, PMu – nest building in *Jacaranda mimosifolia* but disturbed by humans.

Bateleur (A# 99): [prob 51C] Mpala Ranch, Laikipia, 2/4/01, SW – adult seen carrying nesting material.

Gabar Goshawk (A# 114): [conf 74A] Duck swamp, Mara Safari Club, 16/01/00, DA & MC – 2 adults with one highly vocal juvenile.

Jackson's Francolin (A# 162): [conf 63A] Mt Kenya N.P. near Met Station, 26/01/01, SW, two dependent young out of nest following adult.

Crested Francolin (A# 167): [conf 63A] Mpala Ranch Research Center, Nanyuki, 12/11/00, MNM

Common Quail (A# 173): [conf 62D] North Kinangop, Kirima, 17/11/99, IG

Kori Bustard (A# 209): [conf 63C] Mwea National Reserve, Kivaa, 06/05/01, LAB – flightless young accompanying adult in an Acacia-Commiphora wooded grassland.

African Jacana (A# 211): [conf 61A] Awasi, Kisumu, 3/2/00, HH, SP

Crowned Plover (A# 220): [conf 62D] North Kinangop, Murungaru, Mugumoini, 23/9/00, JWW; [conf 74B] Masai Mara, Koiyaki Group Ranch, 2/10/99, Mr. W; [conf 88D] Game Bird Project Imbirikani Ranch, 20/12/00, DM

Black-winged Plover (A# 223): [conf 62A] Road to Baringo near Moi University, 13/1/00, JC

Kittlitz's Plover (A# 234): [conf 89A] Aruba Dam, Tsavo East NP, 25/10/00, RM

Black-winged Stilt (A# 267): [conf 50A] Lake Bogoria, Kampi ya Samaki, 12/4/00, JC

Collared Pratincole (A# 282): [conf 50A] Lake Baringo Kampi ya Samaki, 6/7/00, JC

Tambourine Dove (A# 335): [conf 62A] Menengai Crater, Nakuru, 05/11/00, JC, adult incubating but nest destroyed by bad weather.

Ring-necked Dove (A# 328): [conf 49A] Near Moi University Eldoret, 1/11/99, JC

African Mourning Dove (A# 329): [conf 60C] Ruma N.P., Nyatoto Gate, 27/8/00, BCh

Dusky Turtle Dove (A# 332): [conf 62D] North Kinangop, Murungaru, Mugumoini, 17/10/00, JWW

Emerald-spotted Wood Dove (A# 337): [conf 50C] Lake Bogoria, 17/4/00, JC; [conf 62B] Naro Moru River Lodge, 11/1/01, G&DI

African Green Pigeon (A# 340): [conf 62C] Crater Lake Camp, Naivasha Game Sanctuary, 7/1/00, DL

Feral Lovebird (A# 349): [conf 62C], KWS Training Institute, 13/5/00, AW – nest built under water tank.

White-crested Turaco (A# 359): [prob 48C] River Sio, Mungatsi, 20/10/00, BC, FN, HG

Great Spotted Cuckoo (A# 362) [conf 63D] Mwea NR, Masinga, 05/05/01, LAB, CJ, NN, ABJ, PG

Yellowbill (A# 379): [conf 48D] Pump House Trail, Kakamega Forest Reserve, 7/5/00, GI

African Wood Owl (A# 389): [conf 62B] Wajee Nature Park, 27/12/99, DM

Donaldson-Smith's Nightjar (A# 404): [conf 50A] Lake Baringo, Kampi ya Samaki, 10/11/00, JC - two downy young out of nest under Acacia species bush.

Little Swift (A# 424): [conf 49C] Nandi Hill Post Office, Nandi Hills, 31/03/01, KK

African Pygmy Kingfisher (A# 435): [conf 74A] Mara Safari Club, 19/09/00, DA & MC – Juvenile begging for food.

Blue-headed Bee-eater: Isecheno Forest Station Kakamega, 8/5/00, JMK – two dependent young out of nest; Isecheno Forest Station, 14/9/00, JMK, two sub-adults foraging together with adults – a species with comparatively few breeding records.

White-fronted Bee-eater (A# 441): [conf 74A] Mara Safari Club, 19/11/99-12/04/00, DA & MC – birds seen excavating holes, mobbing predator, and later on juveniles seen in the vicinity.

Red-billed Hornbill (A# 472): [prob 88D] Royal Little Campsite, Kitani Lodge, Tsavo West, 31/5/00, JD

White-headed Barbet (A# 479): [conf 62C] Maai Mahiu, Narok - Nairobi Road, 18/12/99, SK

d'Arnaud's Barbet (A# 497): [conf 74A] Mara Safari Club, 13/04/00, DA & MC – 2 adults feeding one juv.

Red-throated Wryneck (A# 510): [conf 62D] North Kinangop, Kirima, 15/12/99, JG

Fawn-coloured Lark (A# 526) [prob 63D] Mwea NR, Masinga, 05/05/01, LAB, CJ, NN, ABJ, PG

Flappet Lark (A# 529): [prob 74C] Sand River, Masai Mara, 1/1/00, JD

Red-capped Lark (A# 540): [conf 62D] Kinangop Grasslands, Murungaru, Naivasha, 17/7/00, JG; [conf 74A] Mara Safari Club, 18/06/00, DA & MC – 2 eggs in a nest, on short grass cotton plains with few scattered rocks.

Fischer's Sparrow-Lark (A# 545): [conf 62A] Nakuru-Baringo Road, near Moi University, 5/7/00, JC; [conf 50A] Lake Baringo, Kampi Ya Samaki, 07/11/00, JC

Wire-tailed Swallow (A# 552): [conf 62A] Nakuru-Baringo Road, near Moi University, 14/7/00, JC

Black Saw-wing (A# 564): [conf 62D] Kinangop, Mugumoini, 1/8/00, JWW

Common Drongo (A# 566): [conf 62B] Wajee Nature Camp, 25/4/99, DMu

Square-tailed Drongo: Isecheno Forest Station, Kakamega, 18/04/01, JMK – adult incubating eggs, later on fledged young out of nest observed.

Pied Crow (A# 577): [prob 62C] Mai Mahiu, 18/12/99, SK; [conf 101B] Tsavo East, Manyani Gate, 12/10/00, BC, FN, HG; [conf 89C] Mtito Andei, 12/10/00, BC, FN, HG

Dusky Tit (A# 585): [conf 48D] Isecheno Forest Station, Kakamega Forest Reserve, 18/04/01, JMK

Rufous Chatterer (A# 595): [conf 62A] Menengai Crater, Nakuru, 2/10/00, JC

Hinde's Babbler (A# 600): [conf 62B] Wajee Nature Park, Mihuti, 19/10/99, Dmu; [prob 51D] Meru town, 18/07/01, B&CM, P&HP, pair collecting nesting materials.

Little Greenbul (A# 610): [prob 48D] Isecheno Forest Station, Kakamega Forest Reserve, 06/04/01, JMK

Joyful Greenbul (A# 622): [prob 48D] Isecheno Forest Station, Kakamega Forest Reserve, 24/9/99, JKM; [conf 48D] Isecheno Forest Station, Kakamega Forest Reserve, 17/04/01, JMK

Cabanis's Greenbul (A# 626): [conf 48D] Isecheno Forest, Kakamega Forest Reserve, 14/4/01, JMK

Northern Anteater Chat (A# 653): [prob 62D] North Kinangop, Kirima, 7/1/00, DK

Sooty Chat (A# 654): [conf 74A] Mara Safari Club, 15/09/00, DA & MC – pair with juv.

White-browed Scrub Robin (A# 656): [conf 62C] Crater Lake, Naivasha, 26/2/01, PeK

Bare-eyed Thrush (A# 677): [conf 75B] Stoney Creek Restaurant, Kitengela, 20/10/00, PD

Olive Thrush (A# 678): [conf 74A] Mara Safari Club, 8/4/00, DA & MC – fledgling out of nest.

Croaking Cisticola (A# 721): [conf 74A] Mara Safari Club, 15/06/00, DA & MC

Aberdare Cisticola (A# 723): [conf 62B] Aberdare N.P., 10/4/00, SKa, GE & IN

Singing Cisticola (A# 737): [conf 49C] Kaplelmet, Nandi Hills, 11/04/01, KK

Levaillant's Cisticola (A# 742): [conf 62D] North Kinangop, Kirima Center, 25/03/01, JG

Tawny-flanked Prinia (A# 743): [prob 62D] Naro Moru River Lodge, 8/1/00, G&DI

Grey-backed Camaroptera (A# 760): [conf 62D] North Kinangop, Kirima, 3/12/99, DK

Grey-capped Warbler (A# 763): [conf 74A] Mara Safari Club, 6/4/00, DA & MC – adult with 2 fledglings.

Banded Parisoma (A# 775): [conf 51C] Mpala Ranch, Nanyuki, 07/05/01, SW

Pale Flycatcher (A# 792): [conf 49C] Nandi Hills, 24/3/01, KK, juv. begging for food.

African Grey Flycatcher (A# 793): [conf 62C] Mboi-Kamiti Farm, Naivasha, 13/5/01, JWW

Chin-spot Batis (A# 799): [conf 62B] Wajee Camp, Nyeri, 18/12/98, DMu

Dusky Crested Flycatcher (A# 810): [conf 48D] Isecheno Forest Station, Kakamega Forest Reserve, 4/5/00, JMK

African Paradise Flycatcher (A# 812): [conf 51C] Mpala Ranch, Nanyuki, 29/05/01, SW

Grassland Pipit (A# 814): [conf 62A] Ol Bolossat, Nyahururu, 20/1/98, ChW; [conf 50A] Lake Baringo, Kampi ya Samaki, 10/11/00, JC; [conf 88D] Mbirikani, 19/12/00, DMe

Long-billed Pipit (A# 819): [conf 50A] Lake Baringo, Kampi ya Samaki, 09/11/00, JC

Brubru (A# 835): [prob 75C] Olorgesailie Prehistoric Site, 7/2/01, M&LN

Northern Puffback (A# 837): [conf 49C] Nandi Hills, 4/4/01, KK, Ad. male feeding juv.

Black-crowned Tchagra (A# 842): [conf 62A] Menengai Crater, Nakuru, 05/11/00, JC

Three-streaked Tchagra (A# 841): [conf 50A] Lake Baringo, Kampi ya Samaki, 10/11/00, JC

Long-tailed Fiscal (A# 862): [conf 62D] North Kinangop, Murungaru, 07/03/01, JWW

Common Fiscal (A# 864): [conf 63A] Mt Kenya N.P. Main gate, 28/01/01, SW; [conf 74A] Mara Safari Club, 4/4/00, DA & MC

White-crested Helmet-shrike (A# 870): [conf 63D] Mwea National Reserve, Kivaa, 06/05/01, LAB, CJ, NN, ABJ, PG

Retz's Helmet-shrike (A# 872): [prob 88B] road to Umani Springs, Kibwezi, 13/10/00, BC, FN, HG

Hildebrandt's Starling (A# 889): [conf 74A] Duck swamp, Mara Safari Club, 14/09/00, DA & MC

Olive-bellied Sunbird (A# 919): [conf 48D] Isecheno Forest Station, Kakamega Forest Reserve, 1/1/00, JMK

Bronze Sunbird (A# 925): [conf 74A] Mara Safari Club, 12/06/00, DA & MC – female sitting in nest, later seen carrying food; [conf 60D] Suneka, Kisii, 08/04/01, KK

Golden-winged Sunbird (A# 926): [conf 62A] Bahati Forest, Nakuru, 14/3/00, BC

Olive Sunbird (A# 929): [prob 62D] North Kinangop, Mawingo, Gathiringa, 13/10/00, JWW; [conf 101A] Chawia Forest Wundanyi, 17/02/01, MaC, BA

Amethyst Sunbird (A# 932): [prob 48D] Isecheno Forest Station, Kakamega Forest Reserve, 16/10/99, JMK; [conf 63D] Mwea

Nat. Reserve, 6/5/01, LAB, CJ, NN, ABJ, PG; [prob 74A] Mara Safari Club, 11-13/04/00, DA & MC – female building nest but later on abandoned.

Abyssinian White-eye (A# 939): [conf 62D] North Kinangop, Kirima, 14/12/99, JG

Black-headed Weaver (A# 940): [conf 50A] Lake Baringo Country Club, 11/3/00, JC

Holub's Golden Weaver (A# 947): [conf 74D] Narok Plains near Liota Hills, 25/7/00, DMu

Chestnut Weaver (A# 956): [prob 62A] Menengai Crater, Nakuru, 5/11/00, JC

Slender-billed Weaver (A# 958): [conf 60C] Ruma N.P., Nyatototo Gate, 2/6/00, BCh

Black-necked Weaver (A# 963): [prob 48D] Isecheno Forest Station, Kakamega Forest Reserve, 14/04/01, JMK

Red headed Malimbe (A# 968): [conf 48D] Isecheno Forest Station, Kakamega Forest Reserve, 14/9/00, JMK

Yellow Bishop (A# 978): [conf 62C] Elsamere Center, Naivasha, 9/11/00, BMb; [conf 62D] Murungaru, Naivasha, 12/1/00, AMw

Red-collared Widowbird (A# 981): [prob 62C] Karati Gatamaiyu farm, Naivasha, 02/05/01, DG

Grey-headed Sparrow (A# 990): [conf 62D] Murungaru Market, North Kinangop, 20/1/00, SW

House Sparrow (A# 992): [conf 62D] Murungaru, 20/7/00, BK

Chestnut Sparrow (A# 994): [prob 62A] Menengai Crater, Nakuru, 5/11/00, JC

White-browed Sparrow-Weaver (A# 997): [conf 60C] Ruma N.P., Homa Bay, 7/5/00, BCh; [conf 51C] Mpala Research Center, Nanyuki, 29/05/01, SW

Grey-headed Negrofinch (A# 1005): [prob 62B] Wajee Nature Park, Mihuti, 20/10/99, DMu

Red-billed Firefinch (A# 1018): [conf74A] Mara Safari Club, 15/06/00, DA & MC – pair with 2 juv.

Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu (A# 1024): [conf 101A] Ngulia Safari Lodge, Tsavo West, 22/12/00, SW

Purple Grenadier (A# 1027) [prob 62D]**:** Murungaru, Naivasha, 1/12/99, AMw; [conf 62D] North Kinangop, Murungaru, 04/03/01, JWW

Quail Finch (A# 1040): [conf 49A] Near Moi University Eldoret, 1/11/99, JC; [conf 50A] Lake Baringo Kampi ya Samaki, 30/9/00, JC; [conf 62A] Menengai Crater, 2/10/00, JC

Black & White Mannikin (A# 1042): [conf 62B] Naro Moru River Lodge, Nanyuki, 9/1/01 G&DI; [conf 62C] Ruma N.P., Homa Bay, 2/6/00, BCh; [conf 62D] Kirima Forest, North Kinangop, Murungaru, 20/04/01, DG; [prob 74A] Mara Safari Club, 4/4/00, DA & MC – 4 adults carrying nesting material.

Golden-breasted Bunting (A# 1050): [conf 62C] Mbo-I Kamiti Farm, Naivasha, 13/05/01, JWW

Yellow-crowned Canary (A# 1053): [prob 62d] North Kinangop, 3/12/99, JG

African Citril (A# 1054): [conf 62D] Kahuru Phase Two, Naivasha, 8/12/99, EWI; [conf 62C] Kinangop, Mbo-i-Kamiti Farm, 31/8/00, JWW

Yellow-fronted Canary (A# 1056): [conf 74A] Cocktail site, Mara Safari Club, 13/06/00, DA & MC – adult feeding juv.

Streaky Seedeater (A# 1064): [conf 74A] Mara Safari Club, 15/02/00, DA & MC – adult feeding juv. in nest.

References

Lewis, A.D. & Pomeroy, D.E. 1989. *A bird atlas of Kenya.* Rotterdam: Balkema.

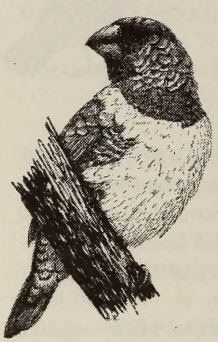
MOMENTS OF CONFLICT

by Marlene Reid
P O Box 80429, Mombasa, e-mail donreid@africaonline.co.ke

There is an African Wood Owl in my garden. It is not a permanent resident but when it is in residence its soft woofly six-note call can be clearly heard. It would sit tantalisingly close to the verandah but well hidden from sight. It did gratify us one evening by landing on the washing line post.

Then, after an absence of some months, I heard its soft call and late one evening the incredible happened. Watching some late-night rubbish on the TV, I caught sight, out of the corner of my eye, of something sitting on my verandah rail. I hardly dared to breathe, for there was the wood owl looking into the room, almost immobile. Its eyes large and dark and full of curiosity. We stared at each other for several long, wonderful moments. Its large round light brown head and squat body on top of what seemed small legs, made it almost like a caricature. Then on silent wings it glided down to the garden and onto the post. I watched it through my binoculars for the next ten minutes and it watched me. Its last stake-out was the tree where it started to call while two hedgehogs scuttled across the garden below the tree.

I thought, maybe it was just paying us a casual visit. I now know that it had a more sinister motive, its main interest being the nest in the top corner of my verandah, filled with about 20 roosting Bronze Mannikins. In fact its visits have now become a regular occurrence.



The mannikins settle down after dusk, and when they are all feeling secure the owl comes calling. It flies onto the verandah, flaps near the nest, the mannikins fly up and it grabs a supper snack. If we are in it's all stations go to save the little residents. We quickly roll down the verandah sun blinds, to try to stop the owl flying in, not always successfully. If the mannikins invade the lounge in their panic, all the family run around turning off all the inside lights so they can fly out to the lighted verandah without smashing into the windows. Awkward individuals who insist on trying to fly through the closed window have to be rescued by hand. Unwary visitors find all this frantic activity quite alarming. Sometimes one or two mannikins roost inside until morning so we have to get up early to let them out.

While all this activity is going on the owl sits softly calling from its favourite branch seemingly unaware of the mayhem it has caused. Recently, we were having dinner when we heard a commotion outside. We rushed around as usual chasing mannikins, and then we saw the owl, sitting quietly among the beer bottles left on the verandah.

Notes to Contributors

Kenya Birds welcomes contributions for possible publication. Send records – observations of birds worth noting, such as new or rare or seldom seen in an area, nesting or feeding young, in unusually large numbers, early or late migrants, or bird lists for a particular site – to:

Records Officer, Ornithology Dept

National Museums of Kenya

Box 40658 GPO 00100 Nairobi Kenya

e-mail: kbirds@africaonline.co.ke

Not all records can be published, as space is limited, but all properly dated and located records are valuable. Records are vetted before publication, and you might be asked to provide additional details. This is just to make sure that all the information in *Kenya Birds* is reliable – do not be offended if your records are queried!

Other contributions may be short notes, longer articles or pictures. Articles on good birding sites ("Birding in...") are especially welcome. Readers have much information to share. We also try to publish articles on globally or regionally threatened species regularly. Shorter notes may deal with anything interesting about birds that you want to share with other readers – interesting behaviour, exceptional sightings, birding tips, book reviews, attracting birds or conservation concerns.

Kenya Birds needs pictures to brighten the magazine! Black and white pen-and-ink drawings are best for the inside pages. Drawings may be of birds, plants or animals associated with birds, or landscapes where birds are found. We would also be delighted with donations of good colour photographs for the cover.

Kenya Birds uses the English bird names in the green *Check-list of the Birds of Kenya*, Third Edition, EANHS, 1996. (The English names in *Birds of Kenya and Northern Tanzania* by Zimmerman, Turner and Pearson nearly all follow this list.) Scientific names are normally only included for birds not in the checklist, or where there might otherwise be some confusion. References to the literature may be included where relevant; references cited should be given in full at the end of the text.

Please remember that *Kenya Birds* goes to a wide, general audience. Articles should be simply and clearly written with a minimum of jargon. More technical articles should be sent to *Scopus*, the ornithological journal, via Nature Kenya, or to

Jeremy Lindsell, Editor, *Scopus*
c/o Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
The Lodge, Sandy,
Beds SG19 2DL
UK
E-mail: jeremy.lindsell@rspb.org.uk

Please send your contribution as an e-mail, if possible. Send articles, notes, reviews, images (less than 1 MB in size!) etc. for *Kenya Birds* to

fleur@africaonline.co.ke or
eanhs@africaonline.co.ke

Articles and notes on diskettes, typed, or in **clear** handwriting are also accepted, although we much prefer an electronic version if available. These, as well as drawings and photos, may be dropped off at the Nature Kenya office at the National Museum or mailed to:

Editor, *Kenya Birds* at Nature Kenya

We look forward to hearing from you!

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION LIBRARIES
3 9088 00997 3025

BirdLife INTERNATIONAL

Nature *Kenya*